SYRIA BETWEEN BYZANTIUM AND ISLAM: MAKING INCOMMENSURABLES SPEAK

Volume 1

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A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY

OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE

BY THE DEPARTMENT OF

HISTORY

Adviser: Peter Brown

November 2010

Abstract

This dissertation deals with the social and cultural history of the Middle East in the Late Antique and early medieval periods. It attempts to address two large historiographic questions—the character of the Byzantine Dark Ages and nature of early Christian-Muslim interactions—from the perspective of the Aramaic-speaking Christian population of the Middle East. The first section focuses on the sophisticated intellectual culture that developed among Syriac-speaking Christians in the Late Antique and early medieval periods and contrasts its efflorescence with the fate of Greek at the same time. It is argued that the Greco-Arabic translation movement of Abbasid Baghdad represents the culmination of a Syriac tradition of scholarship which stretches back to Late Antiquity. The second section of the dissertation seeks to answer the question of why such a culture of scholarship and translation should have developed in the Syriac-speaking world when it did. The nature of interconfessional relations between Christian groups is examined and it is argued that Middle Eastern Christianity in the early medieval period was characterized by a diversity of Christian groups whose separation into distinct churches was only partial, with a consequent intense competition between these groups for adherents. It was this diversity and competition that fueled the development of the flourishing intellectual culture encountered in the first section of the dissertation. It is argued, moreover, that much of the intellectual activity which was taking place among Miaphysites was being driven by the needs of a curriculum of study for educating a distinctly Miaphysite clergy. The final section of the dissertation attempts to understand the place of Islam in the picture of the early medieval Middle East given in the first two sections. Christian-Muslim interaction and religious conversion are examined, as are Late Antique continuities into an Islamic context. Just as the history of Byzantine culture is more than Greek, I argue, the history of the Middle East is much more than the history of the politically-dominant Muslim minority which ruled it: we cannot understand early Islam unless we see it as a minority religion taking shape among a majority population adhering to highly-sophisticated and more ancient rival confessions.

For my Father, Boulos Issa Tannous.
In gratitude for everything.

Acknowledgements

Looking back on my time at Princeton, I feel a profound gratitude for all that has been given to me by so many generous friends and teachers. The debts I have incurred are too many to enumerate and too great to ever hope to pay back. Indeed, it is with not a little bit of fear and trembling that I sit down to write out my acknowledgments—fear that I will unintentionally omit to mention the kindness and help of one or more people and trembling to think that it might upset them or give them cause for offense. This dissertation, to the extent that it contains anything worthwhile, is a product of the things I have been taught and learned from dozens of people all over the world over the course of more than a decade. I feel almost as if my sole role has been to try to integrate what others have taught me into one vaguely coherent text.

Before I get to my time at Princeton, I should mention my two previous academic homes, for friends and teachers (and teachers who became friends) at both places helped not a little amount in my intellectual formation, such as it has been. At the University of Texas, it was Denise Spellberg who first got me excited about the history of the Middle East. I can still recall vividly the amazement, curiosity and delight her classes stirred up in me. After my last class with her and even for years after I left Texas, Denise continued to be a source of support and encouragement. It would not be inaccurate to say that had I never stumbled, through a series of fortuitously interlocking circumstances, in my first semester at UT into her Intro to the Middle East class, this dissertation would never have been written and I may never have formally studied the Middle East. She should not, of course, be blamed or punished for that fact, however. Also at Texas, Professor Peter Abboud and Dr. Aman Attieh gave me a deep love for the Arabic language and an ability to speak and read its classical form with an ease and facility that has served me well for years now. Peter Abboud in particular, who speaks the most beautiful Arabic of anybody I have ever met, anywhere, taught me much in the classroom about the grammar and elegance of Arabic; he also taught me about dignity, character, and faith. I feel blessed and fortunate to have had to the chance to meet and study with such a wonderful person, a *Yafawī*, no less, who knew my family in Mandatory Palestine.

I came to Oxford a kid from Texas, full of enthusiasm to study Eastern Christianity but with little knowledge of the subject. I had the good fortune of landing in the classroom of Sebastian Brock in his last year of teaching there. Words cannot express the wonder of being able to sit at the feet, so to speak, of the master, and learn about Syriac literature and history from him. The bibliography and footnotes of this dissertation are only faint indications of the amount I (and everybody else in Syriac studies) have learned from the *malphono rabo*. It was back in the spring of 2003 that Sebastian suggested to me in his office in the Oriental Institute on Pusey Lane that I work on the letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes. The genesis of this dissertation and my specific interest in the early medieval Middle East in large part go back to studying those letters and trying to understand the world from which they emerged. Sebastian's successor, David Taylor, was my teacher my second year at Oxford and I learned an enormous amount from him about not only Syriac but about a

number of other kinds of Aramaic, too. David taught me more than Aramaic, however. He was also a model for me of how a teacher should be—always willing to do new things and follow the interests of the students, wherever they lead, even when it required much work and sleepless nights on the part of the instructor. I found solace and justification for my own owl-ish behavior in David's love of the wee hours of the morning as the time to do his work. Over the years, David has become a late night email correspondent, a source of sage comments and advice, and a constant supporter and advocate. He has stayed my teacher, even after I left Oxford. But he has moreover become my good friend. The corrections he sent to me at the last second saved me from a huge number of shameful mistakes and typos in this dissertation; yet another reason to feel gratitude to him. Also at Oxford, Alison Salvesen taught me Septuagint, patiently read large amounts of Christian Greek with me and, since I left has, like David, become a supporter, advisor and friend. I feel great pride and thankfulness to have had the chance to be part of Syriac studies at Oxford.

At Princeton, my good fortune of having a large number of gifted and generous teachers continued. Michael Cook inducted me into the tradition of Islamic studies in one of the most challenging and stimulating courses I have taken in my entire life. Professor Cook's enthusiasm for and delight in his subject is something which is truly to be emulated. His meticulously close reading of papers is another. Throughout my time at Princeton, Professor Cook has organized lively and very useful seminars in a variety of specialized subjects which have added extra dimensions to my education there. The Ibn Taymiyya course he funded and sponsored, with its attendant conference, was one of the academic highlights of my time in graduate school. Professor Cook's written work has also been a stimulus to me, going back to my time as an undergraduate. This dissertation is in part an attempt to offer my own humble take on and questions and problems he raised long ago and which have provided me with food for thought and contemplation for years. I have also benefitted from conversations and advice from Professor Cook during my entire time as a graduate student.

William Chester Jordan was another very important part of my formation at Princeton. I came there with no intention of studying the High Middle Ages—indeed, not even knowing that it was a field—but because of his influence, at one point I wondered whether Professor Jordan might just seduce me into his period. But my Latin was not good enough and so the Syriac-speaking Orient was stuck with me. Professor Jordan's razor-sharp mind, exacting high standards, love of words and love for language, appreciation of beautiful style and lively, intense, seminars (and bad, corny jokes) will always come to my mind when I look back on my first two years of graduate school at Princeton. I will also always think of him when I ponder the question of why Vikings would need a king. Professor Jordan gave me a sense for the tradition of Princeton History and for its importance in the wider field of historical studies. Beyond the academic realm, Professor Jordan's concern for and constant mentoring of his graduate students, thoughtfulness and advocacy on their behalves, not to mention his character and integrity made him someone to look up to both inside and outside the seminar room. I believe that five Wild Turkeys, some of them neater than others, once told him that he was a role model; I tend to agree.

John Haldon came to Princeton my second year there and it is hard to imagine my education as an historian having been complete had I not studied with him. Professor Haldon introduced me to the field of Byzantine studies, awoke me to the importance of economic and administrative history, gave me a great appreciation for Marxist historical analysis, made it possible for me to take part in real archaeological survey work. And more. Professor Haldon has also, like others, been an advocate and supporter in all that I have done. I can attest as well that he is also one who looks out for and takes care of his graduate students. What is more, in Princeton, in Turkey and in Austria, I have had not a small amount of fun listening to Professor Haldon recount memorable stories of escapades, high crimes and misdemeanors. I am grateful for all the help he has been to me at Princeton, all the good times I have had with him at Princeton, in Austria and in Turkey, and of course, for all that he has taught me about thinking about the past in a rigorous and analytical way.

Other teachers should also be mentioned: Mark Cohen, who taught me about the Geniza and who taught me about *dhimmī*s. Shahab Ahmed and Yossi Rapoport, who taught me about Ibn Taymiyya and his times. Danny Curcic, who let me sit in on his undergraduate courses and graduate seminars and who taught me about Byzantine art and architecture, both in the classroom and seminar room, but also at a number of different Hellenic Studies events over the years and even in Greece. Manolis Papoutsakis, who taught me to keep Nöldeke's grammar within arm's reach at all times. Patricia Crone, whose seminar I took (well, sort of—at least half of it) and who generously let me attend closed events at the Institute for Advanced Studies, whose written work has influenced me quite a bit, and whose comments on part of this dissertation, at the very end, proved unsurprisingly challenging and incisive. Aron Zysow, who taught me *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *kalām*, but who also taught me an enormous amount about the history of scholarship and bibliography and engaged me in no small number of fascinating and stimulating conversations in and around B-floor. It is as a person who holds the love of scholarly labor as an ideal that I say with the greatest respect that Professor Zysow is perhaps the clearest living example of *philoponia* I can think of. And that's saying a lot. He plays purely and solely for the love of the game. Maria Mavroudi's presence for two of my years here at Princeton was a true pleasure and I profited enormously from both study with her and conversation with her about scholarship. Her enthusiasm and curiosity was as infectious as her mastery of Greek was humbling. David Armstrong, who taught me Greek at Texas, has been a friend, visitor and general source of delight over the years. Dimitri Gondicas has been a supporter and constant source of encouragement for my entire time at Princeton. Hellenic Studies which, I have maintained for a long time, is the classiest outfit on a campus full of classy organizations, felt like home for me while I was a graduate student. I cannot even begin to count how many HLS classes I took, how many lunches I attended, how many evening talks I was present at, not to mention the funding HLS gave me for various summer escapades and for my studies at Princeton. Though I never took a class with Heath Lowry, I learned a great deal from him at the Prodromos Monastery in Serres and at Hellenic Studies events and feel fortunate for the time he so generously shared with me.

There are scholars at other institutions to be thanked as well: several discussions with Robert Hoyland at key moments in my research and writing provided

me with important insights and food for thought. On more than one occasion, John Watt gave me tips and guidance which proved enormously helpful. Bas ter haar Romeny was generous in conversation and in giving me a copy of his important edited volume on Jacob of Edessa. Luk van Rompay was similarly generous in conversation and information. Muriel Debié always discussed Syriac matters with me with a charity and good humor that went neither unnoticed nor unappreciated.

When it comes to friends, I do not even know where to begin. Since my time at Texas, Gene Fojtik has been a dear friend and constant intellectual interlocutor. Scott Johnson is a person whom I think I have learned something from in every conversation I have had with him over the past seven years. He has pushed me and challenged me in ways which I have always appreciated and profited from. Bob Kitchen was a fellow lover of Syriac and a wonderful source of encouragement, both when he was here in Princeton and when he has been in Regina; he also took time between weddings and baptisms on a weekend in late September to cast a critical eye at this dissertation and for that I am grateful. Seeing Tom and Lynn Charles and Professor Charles West and his wife, Ruth, every Sunday at church was always a highlight of the week for me and brought sunshine even during the darkest times. George and Christine Kiraz have been generous and hospitable in ways beyond belief to me for years; *philoxenia* is still alive and indeed, flourishes, in their home in Piscataway. When I taught at Rutgers, Christine would cook me a wonderful dinner of Middle Eastern food on Wednesday nights. Sitting and talking with them about Syriac over her Mardinli fare for an entire semester was another one of many highlights of my time at Princeton. George's generosity to me in giving me books and helping me in other ways has been a great boon to my research. Without his help, I more than likely would not have been able to get hold of the Karshūnī *Life* of Theodota of Amid, which played such an important role in my research for this dissertation. I can only say *tawdi sagi* to them for everything and feel the weight of its inadequacy to express gratitude as I do it. Hidemi Takahashi and Andreas Jueckel are two other Syriac pilgrims whose conversation I have enjoyed and benefitted from. Kristian Heal has been a partner in crime for some time now and his work in making rare Syriac printed material widely available will gain him, I hope, treasure in heaven. It has certainly earned him gratitude in my heart. In Aleppo, Bishop Mar Gregorios Yuhanna Ibrahim was a wonderful host and source of encouragement for my work; he made it possible for me to visit the site of Qenneshre. In Jerusalem, Bishop Sawiros Malki and Abouna Shemoun Jan showed me hospitality that would have made Abraham proud and allowed me to photograph the *Life* of Theodota at St Mark's Monastery. Columba Stewart—a fellow Texan, fellow Houstonian, and fellow Syriacist and enthusiast for manuscripts—and his work at the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library made my dissertation possible in a way that would have been inconceivable even when I entered Princeton through making difficult-if-not-impossible-to-obtain Middle Eastern mss. readily available to me. All the mss. from Mardin which are cited in this dissertation were made possible by the work of HMML's amazing digitalization initiatives. Columba's friendship is yet another one which I have been blessed by.

One of the best things about Princeton for me was the rich community of graduate students from whom I learned an enormous amount about history and also about life. Uri Simonsohn, Yaron Ayalon, Alan Verskin, Krisztina Szilagyi, Amr Osman

and Intisar Rabb in NES (Hey Intisar, ...This is It!) were all good friends and people who taught me much. Luke and Aubrey Yarbrough were thoughtful and generous friends as well, interaction with whom I always appreciated. Luke's detailed comments on my dissertation went above and beyond the call of duty and saved me from many embarrassing errors. George Hatke was both roommate and friend; his staggering erudition was a source of constant profit, amazement and enjoyment for me. Yossi Witztum was something of an intellectual kindred spirit who taught me more than he will ever know or probably want to know and whose conversation I invariably enjoyed and benefitted from. His amazingly meticulous, close reading of this dissertation in its final stages saved me from embarrassing translation and transcription errors. Alden Young and Mike Woldemariam were two friends whose company I also not only thoroughly enjoyed every time I had the privilege to share it: they were also two friends whom I learned a great deal from and I feel grateful to have had the chance get to know them. Fadzilah Yahaya was a friend whose thoughtful support and generous cooking were also crucial in getting me through the tribulations of graduate school. Conversations with Jessica Lowe in the study room and elsewhere were always a source of delight, as was correspondence with her. Valeria Lopez-Fadul's encouragement and conversation helped with the dissertation at the end. Helen Pfeifer was another valued interlocutor. Manu Radhakrishnan's constant encouragement was always appreciated. Loubna El Amine, Katie Ghantous, Manar Moursi and Chantal Hayek were always and unfailingly a lot of fun. Loubna was maybe the only person I knew in Princeton who was always willing to dance, perhaps even more than I. Hanging out with Chantal Hayek in New York and talking about the *ism fāʿil* and the *mafʿūl bihi*—among other things—made one hot summer quite cool. Bob Macgregor and Zack Chitwood cooked for me and made Hibben 1S the best apartment a grad student could hope for during my fifth year. You guys were really just great. Living with Karam Nachar was both an introduction to and a graduate seminar in post-colonial theory and subaltern studies. If he reads this dissertation, he will see his influence on me in more than one place. Late-night debates with Karam about the Middle East, about the Arabic language, about politics, about religion, about the *ancien régime* and everything else were for both of us, I think, sometimes exasperating but always fun and a source of new knowledge and insight. Nancy Khalek provided me good advice and acted as something of a mentor early in my time at Princeton and even after she left. Similarly, Dan Schwartz gave me more help and guidance than he probably realizes and has been a close and valued friend for years. Princeton felt much the poorer for me after he left. Travelling around Syria and Lebanon with him and Richard Payne was truly the trip of a lifetime. Richard, of course, who came in the same year as I did, taught me much about life and scholarship both in seminars and in discussions and debates we held on at least three different continents. Whatever happens in life, Richard and Dan, we'll always have Ugarit. Damian Fernandez helped recruit me to come to Princeton; I still remember how we sat in Chancellor Green cafe and spoke in Spanish and how he told me of the wonders of Borrow Direct. During my time there we took classes together and became good friends, hanging out in Princeton, New York, San Diego and even Vienna. He is my favorite *tangero* and the mention of his name conjures up pleasant associations. I hope we'll be able to hang out in Chicago and DC, soon. David Michelson, Craig Caldwell, and Ariel Lopez, other members of the Late Antique Tribe, were also valued

friends, with whom I had good times, and great discussions and from whom I feel fortunate to have learned. Christian Sahner, whom I knew as an undergrad and whom I had the happy opportunity to re-connect when he returned as a graduate student was a valued friend and confidant. Thomas Carlson had a Syriac soul which I always appreciated. It was with happiness and profit that I got to know Joe Ricci and Lain Wilson at the end of my time in Princeton. At the very end of the dissertation ordeal, when I was at Dumbarton Oaks, the unforgettable Christian Flow caught and saved me from a few embarrassing typos. Also at the very end, Jeannette Rizk made things very interesting.

In my six years at Princeton, the Revolting Masses, our History Department softball team, won the league championship two times and this past summer, if I had dived for a certain low-hit fly ball to the outfield in the bottom of the last inning, we may have won a third. It's one of those historical counterfactuals which I'll think about for a long time. The Masses had nothing to contribute to my dissertation, but they contributed much to my life. To Tom, Angie, Eric, Andy, Bob, Bill, Chris, Nick, James, Tom, John M., Evan, John S., Bland, Joe, and all the others: thanks guys, for all the great memories, all the fun Saturday mornings and summer evenings, more than one magical first week of August, the goofy emails and sarcasm, the bad pizza at Conte's and mediocre food at the Annex, child-size servings of spaghetti, lobster from Maine and missing car keys, Purple Thunder, the News Print Bat, dunking volleyballs, 'Sleepless in Seattle,' and everything else. The Revolting Masses are one of the best institutions in a town full of great institutions and I feel grateful to have worn the red for as long as I did.

The inimitable Lena Salaymeh, an iconoclastic firebrand with a passion for early Islamic history, descended on Princeton in the Fall of 2007 from Berkeley, making it probably the most memorable of many memorable semesters for me at Princeton. Ideas discussed and debated with Lena appear throughout this dissertation, which has benefitted enormously from her insights. Her encouragement and subtle editorial advice have been great boons to me in my time at Princeton and it has always been with great fondness that I look back on her time there.

I met Tom Boeve when I was still a student at Oxford. Little did I know then, Tom would become one of my closest friends at Princeton. His quiet confidence, cool demeanor, sage advice and encouragement meant more to me than he will ever realize.

My first memory of meeting Sara Brooks was, I think, at the old Annex (of sacred memory) many moons ago. Sara drove me around, sometimes even across state lines, she cooked amazing meals, she ate with me at Zorba's way too many times, she listened to me ramble about just about everything, she endured more awful movies of my choosing than any one human being should be forced to suffer through; she was also one of the most considerate and thoughtful people whom I knew while at Princeton and my time there would have been different and poorer had she not been around.

Jeremy Friedman was my roommate for three years in graduate school and he is one of the smartest people I have ever met; I learned an enormous amount about many things from him. He invited me into his home, introduced me to his family, taught me about Judaism, international relations and the Mets. Jeremy also helped me to see things about my dissertation that I couldn't (or didn't) see myself. He is one of my

closest friends and I feel grateful for having had the chance to get to know him and learn so much from him.

Larry Stratton, Tom's roommate, became another one of my closest friends at Princeton. Our lunches every Sunday after church at Nassau Pres were the pivot around which my week revolved. We would discuss life and school, politics, the starry sky above, the moral law within, and everything in between. 3 AM runs to the airport or trips to the US Open Tennis finals were all part of what it meant to be in Larry's universe. Larry's thoughtfulness, his generosity, his irrepressible smile and enthusiasm made the lives of a number of graduate students both at Princeton Theological Seminary as well as Princeton University much brighter and richer. First and foremost, mine.

I met Markus Kohl in my room in Staircase 34 at Oriel College, Oxford, in the fall of 2002. He wore all black and what at the time seemed to be combat boots. I had no idea at the time that this philosophy student with a view of the world that would make Schopenhauer look like an optimist would become one of my closest friends. For all the conversations, over all the years, at Oxford, but especially at Princeton, for all his support, his advice, his patience, his encouragement, his sympathy, his empathy, his toleration of my sophistries and his vitiation of the livability criterion, for opening his house in Trier to me, for everything, I can only say thank you so very much. Vielen, vielen dank.

Jaimiaal Jordan is someone whom I first met when I was 10 years old. He has been a source of support and encouragement to me throughout my life and knows me better than almost anyone in the world. He is more than a friend: he is family. I am grateful to him for the help he was to me, in good times and bad, at UT, at Oxford, at Princeton and now in Washington, DC, where, to my delight, we are neighbors.

I met John-Paul Ghobrial in September 2002 on a night flight across the Atlantic. Fate had us seated next to one another. We were both Marshall Scholars and we quickly became close friends while at Oxford. Without knowing what the other was doing, we both applied to and got into the Princeton History Department. I could not have made it through Princeton without JP's help. He is my best friend. When JP was in Princeton, I once said, I felt like I could breathe with both lungs. Much of this dissertation has been discussed and batted around with him and the final product, whatever its merits, is much improved for having had John Paul's insights to ponder over the years. Our good times have been too many and too much fun to recount; being around JP is like living in an episode of 'Seinfeld.' Among other things, he is the greatest dancer I know and possessed of a delicious wit. Beyond this, I have learned as much from him as I have from any class or any seminar; it was JP who encouraged me to go for the 'big questions' and not just be an antiquarian. I don't know that I have succeeded in looking at some of the big questions, but I have thought about his challenge for years. When I think of JP, I always think of that line from Sirach: φίλος πιστὸς φάρμακον ζωῆς. At the end of my time in Princeton, I battled a volcano to fly to England and be the best man in John-Paul's wedding. Another JP adventure I will never forget. Thanks for everything, habibi. Thank you so much.

Peter and Betsy Brown have been wonderful to me in their generosity, their hospitality, their concern and their help. I learned so much from both of them over the course of more dinners and desserts at their house than I can remember. Professor

Brown's boundless and unfailing enthusiasm and encouragement, his apposite comments, his helpful references, his close reading and insightful suggestions, his gentle proddings—all these and more helped shepherd this dissertation along the stages of life's way. Professor Brown taught me as much or more outside of the classroom as in it, not only at his house, but at GSLA meetings, at Hellenic Studies lunches and events; he even had the patience to once sit and listen to me vent about intellectual frustrations when I caught him after a dinner on campus once. What is more, Professor Brown's belief in and encouragement of the importance of travel and of seeing the places one writes about made it possible for me to visit important places in both the Middle East and Europe, knowledge of which added dimensions to my understanding of my area of study which are as hard to precisely articulate as they are real and palpable. I could not have asked for a better adviser in graduate school and I feel enormously blessed to have had the privilege of studying with him and learning from him. And one special and unexpected joy of my time at Princeton was becoming a pen pal of sorts with Betsy, whose encouraging notes were always something I greatly appreciated and treasured.

My brother, Issa, and my sister, Kate, have been there for me through the years and I could not have survived graduate school without them. My mother, Candace, too, who gave me a love of language and a love of the past and taught me how to write.

Finally, I should thank my father, Boulos, whom I have spoken with almost every day, often multiple times a day, from all over the world, for the twelve years I have been in school, for this thoughtfulness and concern, for his generosity, for his encouragement, for his faith in me, for his love. Of all the many people who have helped me as I wrote this dissertation, it was he who helped me the most. And not just with the dissertation, but with life. He has been the rock of support which makes everything I do possible. I dedicate this dissertation to him as a small token of gratitude for all that he has done for me and for being better than the best father anyone could have ever asked for. *Alf shukr*.

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Introduction: Syria(c) Between Byzantium and Islam

If all of the Aramaic documents in the world were placed in one room, 90% of them would be written in the Aramaic dialect of Edessa, a city in SE Turkey which is today known as Urfa. This Aramaic dialect is called 'Syriac.' For half a millennium, from the fourth century to the ninth, Syriac was the literary lingua franca of much of the population of the Middle East. Syriac writers have left us a broad and rich literature; for students of Christian history, only Greek and Latin are more important and in fact, a number of important Greek works are now preserved only in Syriac. In Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Syriac-speaking missionaries established churches in South India and throughout Central Asia, all along the Silk Road. They reached China by 635 and the traditional Mongolian alphabet is based on the Syriac script as a result of this medieval missionary work. One indication of the importance of Syriac in the cultural history of the Middle East is the fact that much of the religious vocabulary of the Qur'ān is actually not Arabic but rather consists of words which were brought into Arabic from Syriac. Scholars have suggested, for example, that the words '*Qur'ān*,' '*Allāh*,' and '*sūra*,' are all Syriac loan words which came into Arabic.

Despite its immense interest and importance, Syriac has not been as widely taught and studied as Greek and Arabic have. And, although there is a deep tradition of Syriac scholarship in the West which goes back to the sixteenth century, most of that scholarship has focused on Syriac written in the pre-Islamic period. As we move into the sixth, and especially the seventh centuries and beyond, the amount of scholarship becomes increasingly thin and large numbers of texts, often of great interest and importance, remain neglected, understudied and even unpublished.

To students of the late antique and early medieval Middle East, this is a very unfortunate situation. Because of the importance of Syriac as a spoken language and as a language of culture in the region, trying to write about the Middle East in this period without having a strong sense for what is going on in the Syriac-speaking world would be perhaps like trying to write a cultural history of Miami in the later part of the 20th century based only on English-language sources and not using Spanish material as well. This is true for Byzantinists who come at the region from the viewpoint of Greek as well as for Islamicists who come at the region from the viewpoint of Arabic. In the early medieval period, speakers of all three of these languages lived side-by-side with one another, married, talked, debated, fought and worked together. If the early medieval Middle East was a shared world between speakers of these three languages, there is no reason why we should study texts written in them in isolation.

This dissertation represents an attempt to bring Syriac perspectives to bear on questions in Byzantine history and Islamic history in the late antique and early medieval Middle East; my aim is to attempt to integrate these three fields of study in addressing two major historical questions relating to the Middle East in this period. Simply put, the two questions relate to the culture of the Middle East that the Arabs found when they conquered the region in the seventh century and the culture of the Middle East which resulted from those conquests.

In the 630s and 640s, Arab armies swept over what is today Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Egypt, Iran and parts of southern Turkey. By the middle of the eighth century, they had conquered territory stretching from Spain in the West to lands deep in the heart of Central Asia in the East. In the wake of these conquests Arab

tribes emigrated from the Arabian Peninsula and settled in the areas their armies had taken. Exact figures are hard to come by, but the number of Muslims who emigrated and settled cannot have been very large. The great Islamicist Claude Cahen estimated that somewhere between 100,000 and 200,000 Muslims settled in the totality of these newly-conquered lands. Patricia Crone, another well-known Islamicist, has suggested that the number of Muslim immigrants and settlers at the very most cannot have been more than 500,000 people. The population of the conquered regions at that time, by contrast, was between 20 and 30 million people. If we focus only on the Middle East and we fast forward to today, we find that the overwhelming majority of the region is now Muslim; most of its population would self-identify as Arab and many of those who would not call themselves Arabs speak Arabic, if not as a native language, then definitely as a second one. How did this massive transformation happen? Where did all those conquered peoples and their descendants go? What happened to their culture, their language, their beliefs?

Here, therefore, is the one historical question I am interested in taking up in this dissertation: the issue of the Arabization and the Islamization of what was once a Byzantine Middle East. How did the Middle East turn into an Arabic-speaking Muslim-majority region? How did the Arab Muslim conquerors of the seventh century relate to the cultures and beliefs of the people whom they ruled over? These are questions that have occupied Islamicists.

My other question is one that has occupied Byzantinists: what was the state of the Byzantine Empire which the Arabs encountered in the seventh century? What of the societies these Muslims conquered and were now coming into contact with?

The seventh century had been something of a near-death experience for the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantines lost much of the Balkans to Slavic invaders and fought and eventually won a brutal, decades-long war with the Persian Sassanian Empire only to lose much of the Middle East to the Arabs soon thereafter. The seventh century was also a momentous age for Byzantium because it was in this century that the great cities which were the canvass upon which the achievements of Greece and Rome had been displayed underwent dramatic changes and in some cases, simply ceased to exist. Scholars have spilled a great deal of ink debating these changes—one camp prefers to speak of what happened to Byzantine cities in the sixth and seventh centuries as 'decline' and another thinks that 'transformation' is a better way to frame the issue. Notwithstanding semantic differences, there is actually broad agreement as to what happened to Byzantine cities as Late Antiquity progressed. The story that scholars tell goes something like this:

Shifts in investment priorities among Christianized elites meant that the physical appearance of cities was changing: large churches were now being built rather than polytheist temples. Theaters had fallen into disuse. The great fora which had been so characteristic of the classical city were increasingly encroached upon by new building; the rectilinear grid of the city was giving way to narrow and winding streets. The curial class that had been responsible for running and adorning the cities began to weaken and eventually disappeared. What was going on was a shift from the classical *polis* to what we think of as the Islamic *madina*, even before Muḥammad was born. And the death of the classical city in the Byzantine world is regarded by many as marking the border line between antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Tied up with the change in cities were important changes in Greek literature. In the course of the sixth to eighth centuries, the composition of works in many secular genres ground to a halt: historical, philosophical and medical writing all essentially dried up, as did other genres. Much literature was still being written, but it was now of a different kind and usually related in some way to the life and mission of the Christian church. The classical world seemed to have vanished.

Here now are two historical questions: how a small number of Arabs related to the societies they found in the Middle East once they had conquered and the state of those societies as portrayed by Byzantinists. How does Syriac fit into this picture?

First, Byzantine history. Regardless of whether one is an advocate of calling the changes in Byzantine culture in the seventh century 'decline' or whether one is in favor of a kinder, gentler position of 'transformation,' the image of a Byzantine society that both sides agree on—wracked by wars and plague, contracting and vanishing cities, important literary genres disappearing—does not leave one feeling that the seventh century was the most culturally robust period in the Empire's history.

Discussions among scholars, however, of the changes that happen to Byzantine culture in the sixth and especially seventh century share several characteristics: they tend to focus on the culture of the city and they tend to operate on an unspoken equation between 'Greek literature' and 'Byzantine literature.' If, however, we look at what's going on outside the cities and if we broaden our definition of Byzantine literature to include Syriac, things look quite different. Indeed, if for some reason, all the seventh and eighth-century Greek literature in the world were to disappear tomorrow and scholars had to gauge the cultural vitality of Middle Eastern society and

its continuity with previous centuries based only on Syriac and Arabic evidence from this period, the picture they would get would be a photographic negative of what we currently have. The seventh century was a time of great flourishing in the Syriac-speaking world. In fact, in the nearly two thousand years of recorded history of the Syriac language, stretching from the first century till today, one could make an argument that the high point of Syriac culture was actually the seventh century. At precisely the time that Greek literature was witnessing the disappearance of a number of classical genres, some of precisely these same things were flourishing in Syriac. At a time when almost no philosophy was being done in Greek, anywhere, a number of bilingual figures in the seventh and eighth century Middle East were busy translating and/or commenting on Aristotle. Many have heard of Boethius or Bede or Cassiodorus or maybe even Philoponos, but how many have heard of Silvanos of Qardu, Severos Sebokht, Athanasios of Balad, Jacob of Edessa, George of the Arabs? And others like Ḥnanisho‘ I, Mar Aba II of Kashkar, Yonan, and Theophilos of Edessa? All of these figures were working on Aristotelian philosophy in Syriac in the seventh and eighth centuries. Also during this period, when Byzantine historical writing went into hibernation, Syriac writers were busy producing a number of historical works. There was scientific writing, too, and we have strong reason to believe that a tradition of medicine continued unabated in the Syriac-speaking world as well. In the eighth century, Theophilos of Edessa even translated the Iliad and Odyssey into Syriac.

Most of this literary activity was going on, not in cities, where such things had traditionally taken place, but rather in monasteries. What the Syriac evidence points us to is the development in the Late Antique Middle East of a sort of secondary

Romanitas, one which differed from the civic Romanitas which had so defined the culture of the Roman Empire. Most of the Syriac-speaking Christians who were involved in producing these texts belonged to churches which were seen as heretical and the late antique period saw the development of an alternative, intellectual and cultural elite in these dissident movements, an elite whose primary base of operation was a network of monasteries in Syria and Mesopotamia rather than in cities.

If we look only to Greek sources, we will miss the great cultural efflorescence which peaked in the Middle East in the seventh and eighth centuries. If we look only to Greek sources, we will also easily miss the fact that the fabled Greco-Arabic translation movement of ninth-century Baghdad, which witnessed the translation of an enormous amount of secular Greek literature into Arabic, was merely a continuation of this secondary, non-civic late antiquity, a late antiquity which had never ceased and which never had a 'Dark Century,' a late antiquity that was super-charged by 'Abbasid imperial patronage. Nearly all the translators of 'Abbasid Baghdad were Syriac-speaking Christians and many of their translations actually first went from Greek into Syriac and then from Syriac into Arabic. A highly sophisticated culture of translation had developed in the Syriac-speaking world over the previous half millennium and it can be shown that what these scholars were doing differed only in degree but not in kind from what Syriac-speaking scholars had been doing for hundreds of years before.

My comments just now should not be misinterpreted as a sort of Gospel of Syrian exceptionalism, either. This Syriac evidence can help us to think in new ways about Greek-speaking late antiquity as well. What the Syriac evidence makes us aware of in a particularly vivid way is that there was much more going on culturally in late

antiquity than just the super-sophisticated rhetorical culture of the cities which tends to attract our attention. That the Syrians chose to hold on to certain things relativizes the importance of some of the literature that was not held on to in the seventh century: maybe genres that were very important to some people were not so important to others. How many Americans would feel that their culture had suffered an irreparable loss if Neiman Marcus stopped issuing its annual Christmas catalog?

A Syriac perspective, therefore, broadens and enriches our understanding of the cultural vitality of the societies which Muslims conquered in the seventh century and gives us cause to think about how we evaluate the changes that were occurring then. What now can Syriac tell us about how those Muslims related to those societies?

Earlier, I attempted to suggest that in the period after the conquests, Muslims were a very small minority, a drop in a much bigger sea. Not only were they a small minority, many of these Muslims had converted to Islam in the waves of group conversions that occurred at the end of Muḥammad's life once he had achieved political hegemony. After Muḥammad's death, many Muslims apostatized and had to be forced back into the new religion by force, through warfare. What this means for us is that a great number of Muslim settlers in the Middle East probably did not know all that much about Islam. And they were now living among larger communities of people who adhered to highly sophisticated and more ancient systems of belief. Given their demographic status and the fragility of the Islamic identity of many of the conquerors, they faced a real threat of assimilation.

In this precarious situation, we should not be surprised to find that the religious leaders of the early Muslim community had an anxiety of influence. We can see this

reflected in various injunctions attributed to Muḥammad. ‘He who imitates a people is one of them,’ the Prophet is supposed to have said. ‘He who imitates others does not belong to us,’ he is also claimed to have stated. Another report had him ordering Muslims: ‘Do not imitate Jews and Christians.’ Various *ḥadīth* ordered Muslims to dye their beards differently from those of the People of the book, to wear different clothing, to don different footwear, to wear their facial hair differently. Part of what it meant to be a Muslim was that you were *not* a Christian or a Jew.

Despite anxieties of influence and attempts to keep it at bay, however, the Arab conquests would have an enormous effect on the conquerors and their religion. Scholars have pointed to a host of continuities between the Late Antique and early Islamic periods: everything from coins to Arabic grammatical thinking have been held up as examples of the Arab conquerors adapting local practices and traditions for their own purposes. The minarets on mosques are probably an adaptation of Syrian church towers. Muslims shared Christian and Jewish saints and pilgrimage sites, visited and socialized at Christian monasteries, attended Christian church services, sought healing from Christian holy men, believed in the apotropaic power of the Eucharist, had their children baptized by priests, and ingested a large amount of Jewish and Christian Biblical and post-biblical lore into their own literature, which they referred to as *Isrā’īlīyāt*—literally, ‘Israelite stuff.’ A large number of sayings of Jesus from the New Testament re-appear in Muslim literature, attributed to either Muḥammad or to some other unnamed mystic or wise man; the Lord’s Prayer is even found attributed to Muḥammad. What’s more, scholars have discerned in the biography of Muḥammad a number of incidents clearly modeled on Biblical stories, from the life of Christ and also

from the life of David. Early Muslim ascetics were known to associate with Christian monks and the woolen cloak that gave *ṣūfī*s their name was probably an imitation of the woolen garments worn by Christian ascetics. Studies have been done, mostly in Arabic, which show the great influence that a Syriac linguistic substrate has had on the colloquial Arabic of the different parts of Greater Syria. And so it goes.

All of these things point to a simple reality: the Arab conquests resulted in a hybrid culture, one in which a number of Late Antique, pre-Islamic elements continued and survived, though not without learning to speak in Arabic and putting on an Islamic name tag. The question of how all these elements 'entered the bloodstream of Islam,' to use Patricia Crone's expression, is an arresting one and raises a question of social history: what were the milieux of contact, where Christians and Muslims rubbed shoulders and where such cultural transfers might have happened? Here is where Syriac can offer us some help.

As an example, I'll offer the case of Islamic theology, which is known as *kalām*. Scholars have long debated the relationship between the beginnings of Islamic theology and Christian theology; even in the medieval period, Muslims made connections between the first important theological movement in Islam and the role of Christian converts in its beginnings. *Kalām* texts are characterized by a distinctive dialectical technique where opponents are presented with a series of disjunctive questions which back their targets into absurd corners and which are designed to leave those opponents confounded, speechless, and defeated. Some thirty years ago, Michael Cook wrote an important article in which he showed that this disjunctive, aporetic style which appears in *kalām* texts is actually characteristic of pre-Islamic Christian

theological texts produced all over the Middle East. Although the texts Cook pointed to were in Syriac, he suggested that the style probably originated in Greek. Cook made some suggestions as to how the distinctive aporetic style of these Christian works made it into an Islamic context, but came to no firm conclusions. 'We need fresh air, not the repetition of a closed canon of references whose original contexts we have long forgotten,' he wrote, 'We also need not to be afraid of the primary sources. For what is gold to the Islamicist may be dross to the Syriacist.'[1]

With Cook's charge in mind, let us look at a letter written by a figure named George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes. George died in 724 and was a polymath who knew Greek and Syriac and probably also Arabic. The first of his extant letters is a response written to the Abbot of a prominent monastery in Northern Syria. The Abbot had sent George 22 questions, Christological polemic, which he, or somebody associated with the monastery had received and needed help answering. In contacting George, the Abbot was 'phoning a friend.'

The questions themselves are very boring to a modern reader. What makes them fascinating for the historian, however, is their form: they are written in precisely the sort of aporetic style that was characteristic of *kalām*. Though the questions were written in Syriac, I have been able to locate 11 of the 22 in a variety of other Greek and Syriac texts with different attributions.[2] We can literally see in this letter of George an example of this disjunctive style of questioning moving across linguistic boundaries, from Greek to Syriac. Just as interesting is George's identity: he was a bishop over

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[1] Cook, 'The Origins of *Kalām*,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1980), p. 43.

[2] See my, "Between Christology and Kalām? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes," pp. 671-716, in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone*: *Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz, (Piscataway, NJ, Gorgias Press, 2008). Reprinted as Jack Tannous, *Between Christology and Kalam? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes* (*Analecta Gorgiana* 128) (Piscataway, NJ, Gorgias Press, 2009).

Christian Arab tribes. We know that these tribes knew both Syriac and Arabic and we also know that they were involved in some of the earliest Christian-Muslim religious interaction in the Middle East. So, what we have in this one letter is an example of the world of Syriac, Greek and Arabic all coming together in a single document and providing us insight into one potential avenue Late Antique cultural forms traveled as they made their way into an Islamic context.

This dissertation represents an attempt to take very seriously the reality that the early medieval Middle East was a multilingual kaleidoscope of cultures, peoples and religions living side by side and rubbing shoulders. In this region, linguistic boundaries did not necessarily translate into cultural boundaries. For this reason, two of my fundamental contentions are that 'Byzantine culture' includes more than just Greek and that Middle Eastern history after the 640s is much more than the history of the elite, (small) Muslim minority who ruled it. Indeed, we cannot make sense of that minority and of Islam unless we understand it as developing and crystallizing in a majority non-Muslim context. Scholars of Byzantium and early Islam who take seriously the existence and activities of the Middle East's Aramaic-speaking majority in the early medieval period will find new perspectives on the region and culture that the Arabs encountered when they arrived and the hybrid culture that their conquests helped create.

Organizational Overview

I have divided this dissertation into three large sections, each aimed at addressing different, but ultimately related, questions. The first section, 'Between Sergios and Ḥunayn. Or, Whatever Happened to the Dark Ages?' deals with the question

of the transformation in Byzantine literary culture which took place between the sixth and ninth centuries—between, that is, the lifetimes of two of the greatest translators in the Syriac tradition, Sergios of Resh'ayna (d. AD 536) and Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq (d. AD 873). My aim in this section is to look at the transformation of of Byzantine literature not from the perspective of Greek, but rather from the perspective of Syriac and Arabic. Rather than a story of decline, darkness or even serious transformation, what we find, I argue, are massive continuities in intellectual culture extending across these centuries.

Chapter 1 begins in the ninth century, in 'Abbasid Baghdad, with Ḥunyan b. Isḥāq, the most important and famous of all the Greco-Arabic translators; I use him as a wedge to crack open notions of a Byzantine 'Dark Age' by offering a history of Greco-Syriac translation and Syriac intellectual culture which contrasts sharply with the fate of Greek literature at that same time: the period between the lives of Sergios and Ḥunayn was perhaps the most fruitful and exciting in the history of Syriac scholarship.

I offer a close reading of Ḥunayn's celebrated *Risāla* as a way of entering into the world of Greco-Arabic scholars; Ḥunayn, I argue, should not be seen as an Islamic figure at all, but should rather be viewed very much as a person operating directly out of an unbroken tradition of Syriac scholarship which stretched back to the heart of Late Antiquity—he was, after all, an Arab Christian who was a deacon in a church in which Syriac was the liturgical language. I attempt to show that while various genres of Greek literature stopped being produced in the course of the sixth through ninth centuries, many of precisely these same genres continued and indeed flourished in Syriac at the same time. Having suggested that we view the question of the transformation of Byzantine literature from the periphery—Syriac and Arabic—and not the center—

Greek—the Syriac evidence I adduce, I suggest, gives us reason to re-evaluate and invert those terms. What scholars have traditionally seen as being at the center of Byzantine high culture—those genres whose cessation have earned the early medieval period the sobriquet of a 'Dark Age'—were actually peripheral in terms of their importance in the wider context of Late Antique high culture. On this reading, notions of a Byzantine Dark Age or of a cultural decline in the early medieval prove doubly unsatisfying: first, on a very literal level, by implicitly understanding Byzantine culture to mean 'Greek' culture, they fail to take into account the flourishing world of Syriac at the same time. Second, and more profoundly, they pronounce a verdict of decline or darkness on the basis of a vision of Late Antiquity which puts at the center certain kinds of super-elite literary genres that we should rather view as having been at the periphery in terms of the broader feast of high culture.

This first section of the dissertation represents an argument for continuity between the scholarly world of 'Abbasid Baghdad and the scholarly world of high Late Antique Syria. To this end, I attempt to show that there are continuities in more than just genre between Ḥunayn's world and the Late Antique period, there are also continuities in scholarly approach. I devote Chapter 2 to demonstrating that the philological techniques which Ḥunayn was famous for represented an intensification of the philological approach that had been employed by Syriac-speaking scholars living well before him and even before the coming of Islam. Chapter 3 offers a study of the scholarly activities of Jacob of Edessa as an example of a forerunner and antecedent of Ḥunayn in the Syriac tradition.

The second section of the dissertation, entitled 'Identity Politics: Society in the Early Medieval Middle East,' seeks to answer the question of why the flourishing culture of scholarship and translation encountered in the first section of the dissertation should have sprung up and continued in Syria when it did. I use the canons of Jacob of Edessa, in addition to a number of other Syriac sources, to attempt to give a detailed portrait of the social history and intercommunal relations of Middle Eastern Christian communities in the seventh and eighth centuries.

In Chapter 4, I discuss Jacob of Edessa's view of canon law and his anger at its widespread violation as a background for understanding the rich body of canons he has left us. Using those canons, along with a number of other Syriac sources, I attempt to delineate a view of seventh-century Middle Eastern society in which there was confessional chaos and a blurring of boundary lines between various Christian groups.

In Chapter 5, I continue with this point and suggest this was a period in which a doctrinal partition of different Christian groups had taken place, but their actual separation into different Christian bodies was not yet complete: sociology lagged behind ideology. I try to give some idea of the breadth of possibilities of Christian belief, a topic I return to later in Chapter 9, and suggest that Orthodoxy (however one defined it) was a minority position. The diversity of adversarial Christian groups and resultant intense competiton for believers between them manifested itself in different ways. One consequence was the emergence of a culture of widespread, low-level theological debate and dispute among Christians of competing confessions. Another was the proliferation of competing schools and centers of education. This latter development leads us to the monastery of Qenneshre, which was the most important

location for Greco-Syriac translation in the Syriac-speaking world of the sixth to ninth centuries.

In Chapter 6, I address the question of the means that members of the theological elite, like Jacob of Edessa, had to remedy the very chaotic confessional situation that existed on the ground. Their most important tool, I contend, was the control they had over access to the Eucharist and in this chapter, I explore the central importance the Eucharist was seen to have in Christian life. The key to fully and properly controlling the administration of the Eucharist, I argue, as well as the formation of a distinct, well-defined Miaphysite (or 'Monophysite') Christian community, was the creation of a clergy possessed of a clear Miaphysite self-understanding. In the context of intense inter-communal dispute and attempts at 'sheep stealing,' such a clergy would also be equipped to both ideologically defend Miaphysite views as well as launch attacks on rivals. Fundamental, therefore, to remedying the messy Christian confessional situation of the early medieval Middle East, was the development by Miaphysites of a distinct curriculum of study.

In Chapter 7, I turn my attention to the question of education and attempt to sketch out what education seemed to have looked like for Christians in the seventh and eighth centuries. I next try to discern what the precise Miaphysite curriculum of study may have been and make the suggestion that much of the translation activity undertaken by Miaphysites in the seventh century can ultimately be traced back to the monastery of Qenneshre, a place we had previously encountered; the engine driving much of the translation which took place was in fact the need to create a distinctively Miaphysite educational syllabus as well as the necessity of playing catch-up with

Chalcedonian rivals who already had access to the texts that were being translated because they knew Greek. The efflorescence of Syriac scholarship in the early medieval period was, therefore, a by-product of attempts to try to counter-act and deal with the diversity and intense competition which characterized the various Middle Eastern Christian groups.

In Chapter 8, I return to the question of continuity, which dominated the first section of the dissertation, and look at it in both an institutional and personal perspective, in light of the history of Qenneshre. Built in the sixth century and destroyed in the ninth, Qenneshre provides a bridge which directly connects Late Antiquity and the Islamic period; what is more, one can construct teacher-pupil lines of alumni, so to speak, of Qenneshre, which potentially stretch from the age of Justinian to the late Umayyad period. Fallout from Christological controversies and persecutions which reached back to the fifth century had created an alternative, Miaphysite elite in Syria whose basis of operation was monasteries in rural areas, the most important of which was Qenneshre. In this chapter, I also explore the economic foundations of Syrian and Mesopotamian monasteries—put bluntly, how they paid their bills. Since these monasteries had their own independent economic resources they represented cultural powerhouses which stood beside, and to a certain extent, were self-sufficient with respect to, older urban cultural centers. In this chapter, I argue for the need for a de-sectarianized history of the Middle East, which does not view the various Christian groups—Jacobite, Nestorian, Chalcedonian—in isolation from one another.

Such a point, however, opens me to the charge that I have engaged in writing what amounts to a very sectarian history of the Middle East: I have written more than

three hundred pages and not dealt with the most important event in the past fifteen hundred years of Middle Eastern history: the emergence of Islam. I have been attempting to tell a story of continuity: how does Islam fit into that?

In Part III, 'What Difference Did Islam Make?' I attempt to address the question of early Christian-Muslim interactions and the nature of conversion to Islam. I argue that discussions of 'early Christian-Muslim interactions' leave uninterrogated the two most important words in that sentence: 'Christian' and 'Muslim' and substitute the beliefs of theological elites for the beliefs of the bulk of the adherents of these two religions.

Seeking to remedy this, in Chapter 9, I attempt to establish that Christianity in the seventh and eighth centuries encompassed a large spectrum of beliefs. We should not think about Christianity in terms of a set of propositional doctrines, I argue, but rather as an adherence to a set of Christian symbols and rituals which provided means for dealing with very concrete and real difficulties in life.

Similarly, in Chapter 10, I take up the meaning of 'Islam' in this early period and make the argument that 'Islam' in the post-conquest period perhaps did not mean a lot to many of the people whom historians have regarded as Muslims: most conversions to Islam came late in Muḥammad's life and were not individual, highly-interiorized personal decisions, but rather were undertaken in the context of tribal shifts in political allegiance to a powerful new leader who was establishing hegemony in western Arabia. I also attempt to adduce evidence which suggests that in this early period, 'Islam' was in the process of development, debate and dispute among a very

small number of theological elites whose views were not representative of the bulk of Muslims in existence at that time.

Having attempted to nuance and broaden our understanding of the spectrum of Christianity and Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries, in Chapter 11, I look at the issue of conversion and suggest that if we jettison a view of conversion from Christianity to Islam which privileges (abjuration of) belief in certain propositions—like the Incarnation or the Trinity—or affirmation of the prophethood of Muḥammad—and instead, adopt a view which views religion in terms of adherence to certain rituals and symbols, it becomes quickly clear that it was possible to convert from Christianity to Islam and hold on to much of one's previous Christian practice. On this view, conversion to Islam, especially an Islam that was young and evolving, did not represent much of an ideological change at all. Taking my cue from the work of scholars such as F.W. Hasluck and S. Vryonis, who found widespread Christian continuities among Muslims in the Ottoman period, I adduce evidence for similar widespread continuities in Christian practice among Muslims of the early medieval period. A full and proper understanding of the history of the early medieval Middle East requires that historians properly grapple with the demographic realities of the region: Muslims were a small minority surrounded by a majority of non-Muslims who adhered to highly sophisticated and more ancient, rival faiths.

In Chapter 12, the final chapter, I attempt to drive this demographic point home: contrary to the way scholarship has almost uniformly dealt with the region, I argue that the history of the Middle East is not the history of the politically dominant Muslim minority that ruled it. Assumptions by scholars that Muslims achieved

numerical hegemony in the region within a few centuries of the conquests rest on naked assertion without any evidence or evidence which is very problematic. To understand the Muslim minority that ruled the Middle East, one must understand it as existing in dialogue and competition with the non-Muslims around it and must learn to see the anxiety of influence Islam's minority status triggered among Muslim elites. Despite attempts at keeping Muslims from appropriating the traditions and customs of those around them, precisely this happened on a large scale. I offer an (incomplete) list of various pre-Islamic, Late Antique elements (usually Christian) which were adopted by Muslims and which have come to be seen as Islamic, at least on a popular level. The existence of these pre-Islamic, Late Antique continuities in the Islamic tradition raises the issue of how they were brought on board, so to speak. To answer this question, I attempt to sketch out some of the milieux of social contact where Muslims and non-Muslims were rubbing shoulders and where such transfers and appropriations of knowledge and practices might have happened. The aim of this chapter, and of this third part in general, is to offer a more profoundly de-sectarianized vision of early medieval Middle Eastern history: it is not only to challenge the assumption that Middle Eastern history and Islamic history are the same, but also to contend that it is not possible to study early Islam without being aware of the non-Muslim majority in whose midst early Muslims found themselves dwelling.

Part I: Between Sergios and Ḥunayn.
Or, Whatever Happened to the Dark Ages?

Chapter 1: Did Antiquity Ever End? The View From Baghdad.

The ancestor of today's 'Late Antiquity' first crawled out of the sea in the final decade of the nineteenth century. Originally a term used by an art historian interested in speaking of the unique style of a particular age, over the subsequent sixty years, the idea of focusing on the later, post-Constantinian Roman Empire as a distinct field of study would be taken up by and gradually evolve in German, French and Anglo-Saxon historical scholarship.[3] By the final third of the twentieth century, the Late Antique period had become a fully-formed and robust field, walking upright as an independent area of historical inquiry. The explosion of Late Antique studies brought with it growing pains and uncertainties—among them, the question of fixing the boundaries of Late Antiquity as well as the usefulness and desirability of deploying notions of 'decline,' crisis and catastrophe to describe the various changes that took place in the Late Antique period.[4] Peter Brown's *The World of Late Antiquity*, a seminal work in the study of the period, dated Late Antiquity from AD 150 to 750,[5] but a variety of other starting and stopping points for the period were also put forth: Bowersock, Brown and Grabar's *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* suggested that the era ran from

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[3] On the history of the notion of 'Late Antiquity,' see J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 'The birth of Late Antiquity,' *Antiquité Tardive* 12 (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 1-18, reprinted in *idem.*, *Decline and Change in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot, 2006), no. XV. For art historian Alois Riegl (1858-1905) as the 'discoverer of Late Antiquity,' see pp. 3-5. See also the reflections of Peter Brown in his 'The World of Late Antiquity Revisited,' *Symbolae Osloenses* 72 (1997), pp. 5-30. I am grateful to Peter Brown for his comments to me about Alois Riegl's original aims.

[4] On the question of decline, see, for instance, J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 'Late Antiquity and the concept of Decline,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 45 (2001), pp. 1-11; *idem.*, 'Transformation and Decline: Are the Two Really Incompatible?' in J.-U. Krause and C. Witschel, eds., *Die Stadt in der Spätantike—Niedergang oder Wandel? Akten des internationalen kolloquiums in München am 30. und 31. Mai 2003* (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 463-483, esp. pp. 476-478; *idem.*, 'The use and abuses of the concept of "decline" in later Roman history. Or, was Gibbon politically incorrect?' with following discussion by Av. Cameron, B. Ward-Perkins, M. Whittow, and L. Lavan, in L. Lavan, ed., *Recent Research in Late-Antique Urbanism*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, ss. 42 (Portsmouth, Rhode Island, 2001), pp. 233-245. Also cf., Av. Cameron, 'The Perception of Crisis,' *Morfologie sociali e culturali in Europa fra Tarda Antichità e alto Medioevo*, vol. 1 (Spoleto, 1998), pp. 9-31.

[5] P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* (London, 1971).

250 to 800, for instance.[6] Regardless of whether one started Late Antiquity with the beginning of the Tetrarchy in 284 AD or with the reign of Constantine the Great, or whether one ended it with the assassination of the emperor Maurice in 602 AD or with the Arab conquests of the 630s or whether one chose some other set of dates—e.g., 200, 395, 425, 600, 700, 800[7]—there was a wide and general feeling that this period of time shared a bundle of characteristics distinct enough to merit demarcating it as a discrete field of study. Broadly speaking, the standard narrative of Late Antique history focused on transformations which could be placed in one of two categories: the fundamental, long-term changes that resulted from the administrative, military and fiscal re-organization of the Roman Empire in the wake of the so-called 'Crisis of the Third Century' (which may or may not have actually been a crisis)[8] and the wide-ranging ramifications of the Christian revolution which swept the empire during this same period.[9]

My purpose in this chapter is not to assay an answer to a question so large as When Antiquity Ended, to put, as it were, a death date on the Classical World's tombstone. It is, rather, much more modest. I am interested in a smaller matter, one aspect of the massive cultural transformation which took place in the eastern Roman world between the sixth and ninth centuries: the changes which took place in learning

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[6] See G.W. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar, *Late Antiquity: A Guide to the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. vii.

[7] For these dates, see C. Ando, 'Decline, Fall, and Transformation,' *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1.1 (2008), p. 32.

[8] On the crisis, see. A. Giardina, 'The Transition to Late Antiquity,' in *The Cambridge Economic History of the Greco-Roman World*, vol. 1, edd. W. Scheidel, I. Morris and R. Salle (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 757-768 and C. Witschel, *Krise –Rezession – Stagnation? Der West des römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Frankfurt am Main, 1999), pp. 375-377. For a defense of a third-century crisis, see W. Liebeschuetz, 'Was there a Crisis of the Third Century?' in *Crises and the Roman Empire: Proceedings of the Seventh Workshop of the International Network Impact of Empire (Nijmegen, June 20-24, 2006)* (Leiden, Boston, 2007), pp. 11-20.

[9] The first part of Peter Brown's classic *The World of Late Antiquity*, 'The Late Roman Revolution,' for example, trains its focus on the social and religious transformations which characterized this period.

and literary culture. Discussions of the transformation or even decline of literary culture in Late Antiquity focus on Greek and Latin evidence and as such, represent a very metropolitan perspective on Late Antique society.[10] Indeed, it comes as no surprise at all that one of the more strident recent advocates of 'decline' in the ancient world writes from the perspective of the Western empire and begins his book with an autobiographical notice informing his readers that he grew up in Rome, 'the heart of the empire,' noting that perhaps as a result of the place of his birth and early formation, the 'essential outlines' of the view which he summarizes as 'with the fall of the empire, Art, Philosophy, and Decent drains all vanished from the West,' 'have always come naturally to' him.[11] Though comparatively few scholars actually hail literally from Rome, for many scholars with a background in classics, trained in reading the 'Greats' of the ancient world, Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople or some other great antique urban center serve as discursive homes, so to speak. As a result, the viewpoint of the Greek or Latin-speaking elites of the metropole can come more naturally.

The image of antiquity known and cherished for centuries in the West has been decidedly tilted in favor of a small slice of the spectrum of human experiences of the antique world: the art, literature and way of life that fired imaginations from Petrarch to Byron and still inspires today was produced by and for a very small urban elite. The Romans ruled their domain indirectly through a large network of cities of widely

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[10] For the bias towards Greek and Latin and the Mediterranean world in Late Antique studies, cf. J. Walker, 'The Limits of Late Antiquity: Philosophy between Rome and Iran,' *The Ancient World* 33:1 (2002), pp. 49-51. See M. Morony, 'Bayn al-Fitnatayn: Problems in the Periodization of Early Islamic History,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 40:3 (1981), p. 248 for a comment on the influence of a 'metropolitan theory of culture' on periodizaton.

[11] See B. Ward-Perkins, *The Fall of Rome and the end of Civilization* (Oxford, 2005), p. 3 for the autobiographical disclosure, p. 2 quotes William Robertson on the consequences of fall of Rome, a view which Ward-Perkins summarizes as 'In other words, with the fall of the empire, Art, Philosophy and decent drains all vanished from the West.'

varying size and importance; of the 1,000 or so units of governance in the eastern empire, for example, at least 900 of them were cities.[12] 'Geographically,' A.H.M. Jones wrote, 'the map of the empire was a mosaic of city territories,'[13] and the empire itself is perhaps most usefully thought of as a 'commonwealth of cities.'[14] As a result, cities often hold center stage, both in their social structure and in the culture associated with them. And over the course of the Late Antique period, a variety of factors—including plague, brutal warfare, earthquakes, and changes in imperial administrative structure, in addition to Christianity—combined to transform radically the urban layout and culture of the empire. When it comes to fixing the borders of Late Antiquity, these cities are like canaries in a mineshaft: their fate is seen to be indicative of the lot of the ancient world itself. It is is seductively simplistic, therefore, to say that when the ancient city changed, indeed, when it came to an end, so did antiquity.[15]

When viewed from the metropolitan perspective of Rome, Constantinople, Antioch or Alexandria and from a Greek or Latin vantage point, the 'decline' and demise of certain aspects of classical literature does perhaps seem self evident. By the late sixth century, Christianization and the changing nature of cities and the urban elite were beginning to have an effect on Greek culture and literature. These shifts led to the emergence of what has been termed 'New Themes and Styles' in Byzantine literature: the seventh and eighth centuries witnessed a great deal of writing still

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[12] A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*: *284-602*, vol. 1, (Baltimore, 1986), p. 714.

[13] Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, vol. 1, p. 713.

[14] P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom* (2nd ed., Oxford, 2003), p. 54. cf. *idem*., *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992), p. 25.

[15] cf. Av. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity: AD 395-600* (London and New York, 1993), p. 152: 'unlike the medieval world, the civilization and high culture of classical antiquity, and thus also of the Roman empire, rested on a network of cities. The end of classical antiquity thus seems to imply the end of classical cities, and vice versa.' Also, cf. J. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*, Revised ed. (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 445-447 and C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005), p. 595.

taking place in Greek, as Averil Cameron has pointed out, but it was in new and different genres and therefore off the radar screen of most traditional historians.[16] Kazhdan spoke of the literature of the 'Dark Century' as being dominated by 'the "three H's:"' homiletics, hymnography and hagiography.'[17] Treatises against heresies, Questions and Answers, *catenae*, acts of councils, saints lives, apocalypses, catecheses, hymns and sermons—these are the genres in which the literary remains of this period come down to us.[18]

The flip side of this emergence of 'New Themes and Styles' was the disappearance of more traditional types of writing. The period stretching for 250 years or so after the end of the reign of Justinian in 565 has been regarded as a nadir in Byzantine cultural history, the 'Dark Ages.' 'From our point of view,' Paul Lemerle wrote, 'there was no poorer period in the whole history of Byzantium, if we judge it by the documentation which has come down to us.'[19] Now, the less classical, more popular Greek—pioneered, as it were, by Malalas—was to become the norm. The composition of secular literature came to an almost complete halt. Kazhdan spoke of a 'Farewell to Historicity;' such historical works as might have been produced were 'either doubtful or insignificant,' and further, 'the century and a half after George of Pisidia and the

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[16] See Av. Cameron, 'New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature: Seventh-Eighth Centuries,' pp. 81-105, in Av. Cameron and L. I. Conrad, edd., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I: Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Princeton, 1992), cf. p. 85: 'Yet an enormous amount of writing *was* going on in the seventh and eighth centuries. ... We simply do not "see" it unless we look harder than most historians are used to doing, and in different directions.' Also cf., *idem*., 'New Themes and Styles in Greek Literature, A Title Revisited,' in S.F. Johnson, ed., *Greek Literature in Late Antiquity: Dynamism, Didacticism, Classicism* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 11-28.

[17] A. Kazhdan, L.F. Sherry and C. Angelidi, *A History of Byzantine Literature (650-850)* (Athens, 1999), p. 139.

[18] I have taken this list of new genres from E. Chrysos, 'Illuminating Darkness by Candlelight: Literature in the Dark Ages,' pp. 15-16, in P. Odorico and A. Agapitos edd., *Pour une «nouvelle» histoire de la literature byzantine. Problèmes, methods, approaches, propositions* (Paris, 2002).

[19] P. Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase*, trans. H. Lindsay and A. Moffat, (Canberra, 1986), p. 81.

Paschal Chronicle was a barren period in the development of Byzantine historical writing.'[20] Though there may have been texts written which are no longer extant, we possess no Greek historical writing from about 630 to about 810.[21] This was a similarly sterile period for philosophy: between Stephen of Alexandria and John Damascene, only a handful of rather meager texts can stake any claim to being Byzantine philosophy;[22] indeed, it is not until Leo the Mathematician in the ninth century that Byzantine philosophy remerges in its own right and not indirectly in theological works.[23] After George of Pisidia, working in the reign of Herakleios, imperial panegyric stopped being written.[24] The cupboard is similarly bare when it comes to other secular genres in this period: letters, legislation, epigrams, medical writing and inscriptions all vanish or very nearly so.[25] Even in terms of manuscripts, the sixth to ninth century is a particularly penurious age: practically no secular and only a small handful of religious manuscripts survive from this period.[26]

Things look pretty grim for Byzantine high culture when viewed from Constantinople. In this chapter, however, I propose abandoning the traditional metropolitan perch of the great Roman cities of the Mediterranean for that of ninth-century Baghdad; I will leave behind Greek and Latin for two other languages, Arabic

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[20] Kazhdan et al., *A History of Byzantine Literature (650-850)* pp. 20-21; p. 21 lists the historical works (no longer extant) which may have been composed in the 'Dark Century.'

[21] See C. Mango, "The Tradition of Byzantine Chronography," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 12/13 (1988-89), pp. 364-365. See also M. Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing after Procopius: Variety and Vitality,' in Av. Cameron and L.I. Conrad, edd., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I: Problems in the Literary Source Material* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 25-80, esp. the section, pp. 66-74, 'The End of Traditional Historiography.'

[22] See M. Roueché, 'Byzantine Philosophical Texts of the Seventh Century,' *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974), pp. 65, 67.

[23] See Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase*, pp. 81-82 and H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner I* (München, 1978), p. 18.

[24] See Kazhdan et al., *A History of Byzantine Literature (650-850)*, p. 145.

[25] See Whitby, 'Greek Historical Writing,' p. 69; Chrysos, 'Illuminating Darkness by Candlelight,' p. 13; Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*, pp. 81-82.

[26] See Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism*, pp. 82-84.

and Syriac. It is a fatal, self-impoverishing mistake to understand 'Byzantine literature' to refer only to 'Greek literature' and an error to limit Byzantine culture to regions under the political control of Constantinople or even governed by (Chalcedonian) Orthodox rulers. Obolensky created a Byzantine Commonwealth in medieval Eastern Europe.[27] My intent is to move the borders of this notional commonwealth south and east and my aim will be to view the question of the change of Late Antique literary culture from an alternate, expanded perspective—to see how the questions of decline and transformation look when viewed from other cultural centers and not the perch of the elites of certain Mediterranean cities, and to ascertain their validity when viewed from the ninth century and not the prosperous condition of the Age of the Antonines. Viewed thus, things look quite different. Indeed, seen from the alternative perspective of Arabic and Syriac sources, the 'Dark Ages' never seemed to have occurred at all in the Middle East. Or so I shall argue.

We will encounter a rich efflorescence of translation, scholarship and study among the Syriac-speakers of the Middle East in the early medieval period. The existence of such activity will call into question the actual importance of the hyper-literary urban culture of the late antique period which has been the focus of much traditional scholarly attention. What the evidence from Syria will suggest is that there were many strands of sophisticated cultural activity going on in the Late Antique and early medieval periods: many career paths, as it were, lay open before intelligent young men on the make, and societies in these centuries expressed their high cultural energies in pluriform ways. Focusing on only the elite rhetorical culture of the cities

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[27] See D. Obolensky, *The Byzantine Commonwealth: Eastern Europe 500-1453* (New York/Washington, 1971).

obscures the breadth and variety of these expressions and leaves us with a false sense of loss or cultural sterility when one of them, the one which scholars have looked most keenly at, abates.

My argument will therefore operate on two planes: at a fundamental level, will be the sheer fact that many genres which ceased in Greek in the course of the early medieval period not only continued in Syriac, but thrived. To a certain extent, therefore, notions of cultural decline will be found to be unsatisfying, on their own terms, by virtue of their provincialism—they are unaware of (or undervalue) the world outside of Greek sources, a world which, in the Middle East at least, was often literally next door.

At a second, and deeper level, however, the way and contexts in which these genres continued and flourished will suggest that the Dark Age in Byzantine high culture perhaps was not as important as we have made it out to be: picking out only one strain of high culture and using its vicissitudes to gauge the cultural vigor of a wider society actually misses quite a bit which is going on in that society. What the Syriac evidence points us to in a particularly clear way is precisely this: that much more was going on culturally than writing epigrams or imposing imperial panegyric in Late Antiquity, as interesting as these might have been and may still be. The Syrians were exceptional not for having participated in this wider feast of Late Antique culture, either; what made them exceptional was that they supped at it longer than others did. This being the case, the example of Syria offers us the chance to broaden our understanding of Late Antique culture throughout the eastern Mediterranean.[28]

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[28] I am grateful to Peter Brown for suggesting to me many of the ideas and turns of phrase in the previous paragraphs.

I will proceed as follows. I will look at the *Risāla* of Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and use it as a gateway to enter into the study of a ninth-century scholar-translator working in Baghdad. Next, I will place Ḥunayn's methods and activities in the context of Greco-Syriac translation activity that extends back into the heart of the Late Antique period. Ḥunayn was operating out of a continuous, unbroken tradition of translation of both religious and secular texts from Greek into Syriac. While Greek production of texts in secular genres may have almost completely withered away in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries, such activities continued, in unbroken succession in Syriac and then later in Arabic. The various putative crises and catastrophes of the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries had no discernible effect on these activities. In fact, they reached their zenith when the alleged Dark Ages were at their nadir.

Trying to understand Ḥunayn, the tradition he worked from, and the history of the multilingual space he occupied will eventually lead us back to the seventh and eighth centuries, to the history of a monastery called Qenneshre, and to an inquiry into the nature of early 'Islamic' society in the Middle East. These are questions which will occupy us in subsequent chapters. By the time I have finished, my hope is twofold. Greek will have been parochialized in discussions of the end of the ancient world and paradoxically enough, Islam will have been relativized in importance in discussions of the early 'Islamic' Middle East.

Before we can achieve such lofty goals, however, we must first begin with the *Risāla* of Ḥunayn. It is to that document that I now turn.

Ḥunayn and his *Risāla*

In the year 848 AD (231 AH) Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq wrote a letter to a man named ʻAlī b. Yaḥyā. ʻAlī was one of the scribes of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn as well as a boon companion to the Caliph. Known as ʻIbn al-Munajjim,' ʻthe son of the astrologer,' ʻAlī himself reportedly had an inclination towards medicine and for that reason had had a number of books on that subject translated for himself.[29] This was perhaps why ʻAlī had written to Ḥunayn and told him that there was need of a document which collected all the information one might need about the medical books of the ancients—which ones were needed, what they contained and even how the books were divided up. ʻAlī wanted Ḥunayn to compose just such a document for him.

Ḥunayn, however, had undergone a personal calamity and had lost his books.[30] Without books, he had informed ʻAlī that his memory was not up to the task of providing such a list. He also, however, had let ʻAlī know that a Syriac-speaking Christian had made a similar request, asking him to provide an enumeration of the books of Galen and furthermore, requesting that Ḥunayn mention for him which of those Ḥunayn and others had translated into Syriac and other languages. Ḥunayn had

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[29] On ʻAlī, see Ibn Abī ʻUṣaybiʻa, *ʻUyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'* (Beirut, 1965), p. 283. Also see M. Meyerhof, ʻNew Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq and His Period,' *Isis* 8:4 (1926), p. 714 on ʻAlī. His father was Muḥammad b. Musā, ʻal-Munajjim,' on whom also see Ibn Abī ʻUṣaybiʻa, *ʻUyūn al-anbā'*, p. 283.

[30] Fellow doctors had plotted against him and tricked him into spitting on an icon before the Caliph al-Mutawakkil. This triggered a chain of events that ended up with Ḥunayn receiving 100 lashes, being imprisoned, having all his furniture and household items and books confiscated and having his home destroyed with water. See Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʻa, *ʻUyūn al-anbā'*, p. 268. On this whole incident, see also, G. Saliba, ʻCompetition and the Transmission of the Foreign Sciences: Ḥunayn at the ʻAbbasid Court,' *Bulletin of the Royal Institute of Inter-Faith Studies* 2:2 (Autumn 2000), 85-101. Saliba provides an ET of the entire incident as reported by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʻa. F. Rosenthal thought that only the broad outlines of this story had any basis in real events and thought most of it to be inauthentic, see his discussion of it in ʻDie Arabische Autobiographie,' *Analecta Orientalia* 14 (1937) 15-19, especially his critical remarks on pp. 18-19, but compare with Saliba's comments, ʻCompetition and the Transmission,' p. 101, n. 10. Ḥunayn is eventually restored to the Caliph's good graces and is given three of the Caliph's own dwellings to live in. The Caliph has brought to him everything he needs, including books, though it is not clear whether these are the same books he had previously lost. See *ʻUyūn al-anbā'*, p. 270.

in fact written the unnamed man just such a letter, in Syriac. When ʻAlī learned of it, he asked Ḥunayn to translate it for him, quickly, into Arabic.[31]

Ḥunayn's Syriac letter is now lost, but the Arabic translation he made of it for ʻAlī b. Yaḥya, the ʻAbbasid scribe, along with the additional information he included in the Arabic version, does survive. Known as the *Risāla,* or simply, *Letter,* it is an extraordinary document, listing 129 works of Galen, describing their contents, their authenticity and whether they have been translated (and by whom and for whom) into Arabic or Syriac. It is an important source for the history of ancient medicine. From it, for example, we learn of eight books of Galen which were available in ninth/third-century Baghdad but which are no longer known today.[32] It has also been used as a primary basis for attempting to reconstruct the curriculum of the ancient medical school at Alexandria.[33]

The letter furthermore provides an invaluable and precious window into the cosmopolitan world of ninth/third-century Baghdad and the mixing of cultures, languages and traditions which took place there. It offers its reader a window into the practices of Ḥunayn, known in the medieval West as Johannitius, one of history's most famous translators, and the networks of patrons and translators whose interactions formed one of the engines which powered the famous Greco-Arabic translation movement of the ʻAbbasid period.

What makes the *Risāla* that Ḥunayn wrote perhaps most interesting is that it makes for quite compelling reading. The letter allows us to see a medieval polyglot

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[31] See G. Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq über die syrischen und arabischen Galen- übersetzungen* (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 1-2 (Arabic text); 1-2 (GT).

[32] See Meyerhof, 'New Light,' p. 721.

[33] See A.Z. Iskandar, 'An Attempted Reconstruction of the Late Alexandrian Medical Curriculum,' *Medical History* 20 (1976), pp. 235-258.

scholar at work, translating, revising, critiquing others, searching for manuscripts. Reading it transports us in a direct and palpable way into the private study of a past master and plants us in the middle of a vibrant circle of Christians, Muslims and even Sabians who were actively engaged in appropriating and expanding upon Antique and Late Antique science. This being so, it will provide a useful entry point for trying to understand the transformations that learning and culture underwent in the passage between the Late Antique and early Medieval periods. It will further help us engage the question of what the so-called decline in traditional literary culture in the pivotal period of the sixth to ninth centuries.

Before writing the original Syriac letter, Ḥunayn apparently had had some sort of exchange or correspondence with the unnamed Syriac-speaking Christian (*rajulan min al-suryāniyyīn*) who had made the initial request for a listing of medical works. Ḥunayn had told him that Galen himself had written a book, the *Pinax* ('I translated it as '*al-Fihrist*'') which did precisely what the man wanted: it described the works of Galen, their various aims, and the divisions of each one. It seems that Ḥunayn had suggested that the man read the *Pinax*, which was available in both Syriac and Arabic.[34]

But this was apparently not good enough. What was needed was an updated version of the *Pinax*, a sort of annotated bibliography. The man, according to Ḥunayn, had responded to the suggestion of reading the *Pinax* by saying 'we, along with others who read the books [of Galen] in Syriac and in Arabic [and] have this goal, have a need

[34] Ḥunayn describes to 'Alī b. Yaḥyā the beginning of the Syriac letter he had written and seems to paraphrase its preliminary contents. For the following summary which I give, see Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 2 (Arabic text). He begins, 'The first thing—may God strengthen you!—I started with in that document [sc. the original Syriac letter] was that I named the man and I described what he had asked. I said, "You have asked me that I make a description for you of the matter of the books of Galen…"' (cf. GT p. 2)

to know what has been translated of these books into the Syriac and Arabic tongue[s] and what has not been translated.'[35] Furthermore, he continued, more things needed to be known: what Ḥunayn himself had translated and what others had translated, which books Ḥunayn first translated and then later revised or re-translated, whom the books were translated for, the measure of ability of each person doing the translating, even the point in a person's life when the translation was carried out. All of these were important pieces of information: all could help a person know whether a book was available and help evaluate its quality.

The desire to know who the patron of the translations was is an interesting one. Perhaps it could have been the result of several factors. Different patrons, as we will see, may have had different preferences in how they wanted things translated, for one. More practically, knowing whom a book had been translated for could have been important in helping track down a copy of it.

The desiderata of the Syriac-speaker apparently continued: another element which was important for Ḥunayn to mention was the availability of manuscripts, when that was pertinent. One might also need to know, he noted, which of the books that have not been translated he has found a Greek manuscript for, which of them have no Greek copy in existence, and which of them have only partial copies, 'for this matter is necessary so care can be taken to translate what has been found of them and so that what has not been found can be looked for.'[36]

The requested document had a number of detailed demands, but Ḥunayn eventually realized that if it were to be written, it would be useful to many others,

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[35] G. Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 2 (Arabic); GT, p. 2.
[36] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 2-3 (Arabic); GT, p. 2.

including himself: 'When you said what you did about this matter, I realized that you had been right in your statement and that you had summoned me to a task whose benefit included you and me and many [other] people.'[37] Nevertheless, just as Ḥunayn would later tell 'Alī b. Yaḥyā, his task was made difficult by the unhappy loss of his books: 'for a long time, I continued to delay in what you had asked and to put you off—because of the loss of all my books which I had gathered, book by book, my entire life, since I began to have understanding, from all the countries I had passed through.'[38] Nevertheless, as with 'Alī b. Yaḥyā, Ḥunayn did write up the document that had been requested, relying upon his memory to do so rather than his books. The Syriac letter formed the basis of the Arabic *Risāla*, which we now possess.

Because one of Ḥunayn's stated aims in the *Risāla* was to comment about the availability of Greek manuscripts for works which had not been translated, the document offers us the equivalent of a split time in a race: in the journey of ancient texts from antiquity to the present, we can see in the *Risāla* the state of the question as it stood in the ninth century. Like scholars today who travel to remote libraries and monasteries in search of new manuscripts or rare texts, Ḥunayn traveled widely in search of documents. Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a (d. 668 AH/AD 1269) reports that Ḥunayn went to a number of countries and to the furthest parts of Byzantium (*bilād al-rūm*) looking for copies of books he planned to translate.[39] This image is confirmed by the evidence of the *Risāla*. We have already seen Ḥunayn's comment about collecting books in all the

[37] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 3 (Arabic); GT, p. 2.
[38] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 3 (Arabic); GT, p. 2.
[39] *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 260.

countries he passed through.[40] Another passage, quite famous, gives an even more vivid description of the lengths Ḥunayn was willing to go to in search of a prize. Looking for Galen's *On Demonstration* (no. 115 of 129 in his list), he traveled through some of the most culturally rich areas of the former Roman world, only to have mixed results:[41] 'Till the present, a complete copy of the book *On Demonstration* in Greek has not fallen into the hands of any one of our day, despite the fact that Gabriel [b. Bukhtīshū'] has concerned himself with seeking it out with great care. I myself have made the utmost effort in looking for it. In search of it, I went throughout the regions of all the Jazīra and Syria and Palestine and Egypt until I reached Alexandria. I found nothing of it, save in Damascus, [where I found] about half.' The sections Ḥunayn did find, however, were not unproblematic: 'they are not in sequential order and incomplete.' Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū', a prominent physician, had also found parts of the *On Demonstration*, but they were not the same as the ones Ḥunayn had found.[42]

The *On Demonstration* was not the only book Ḥunayn had trouble locating. No. 67 in the *Risāla*, the *Book on Pulse, against Archigenes* was also not to be found: 'This book has not been translated till this point, nor have I seen a manuscript of it in Greek.

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[40] On Muslim scholars looking for manuscripts, see F. Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship* (Rome, 1947), pp. 18-20. NB, however: Ḥunayn was a Christian member of the Church of the East (a 'Nestorian'), not a Muslim.

[41] Ḥunayn gives the titles of the books of Galen in Arabic. Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 46-48 provides their Greek equivalents. I rely on Meyerhof, 'New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq,' pp. 690-701, for the Latin equivalents which I will supply in the footnotes. In my English translations of their titles, I have often been guided by Bergsträsser's German renderings. In general, I give page numbers to Bergsträsser's German translation because I frequently have consulted it in making my own English translation.

[42] See Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 47 (GT p. 39). The book in question is also known as the *De Demonstratione*.

Nevertheless, some people, whose report I trust, have informed me that they have seen it in Aleppo. I carefully sought it there, but did not get hold of it.'[43]

Some books were simply not to be found at all. No. 80, the *On Medicines Which are Easy to Find*, may have dealt with medications which were easy to track down, but manuscripts of it were not: 'I have not found a Greek manuscript of this book at all and have not heard that anyone has a copy, despite the fact that I have been searching for it with extreme care.' He perhaps took solace in knowing that others before him had been unable to find the book as well, 'I have found that Oreibasios mentioned that he did not find a manuscript of this book in his time.'[44] Of the *On Abridging the Books of Marinos on Anatomy* (no. 22), he wrote, 'till this point we have not seen it, nor have I heard anyone saying that he has seen it or that he knows where it is located.'[45] The same is the case for Ḥunayn's next entry, no. 23, the *On Abridging the Book of Lykos Concerning Anatomy*: 'The story of this book is the same as what precedes it. I have not seen it and I know of no trace of it.'[46] No. 29, the book *On what Lykos Did Not Know About Anatomy* elicits the comment: 'As for me, I have not seen it and have not heard that anybody has seen it.'[47] No. 30, *On What He Disagrees with Lykos On*, has the same response: 'I have not seen it and I do not know anyone who has seen it.'[48] On no. 97, his

[43] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 33 (GT p. 27). This is the *De pulsibus adversus Archigenem*. He adds at the end of this entry, 'A copy of it has fallen into the hands of Muḥammad b. Mūsā.' This may have been a later addition written in by Ḥunayn as he updated the work after its original composition.

[44] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 37 (GT pp. 30-31). This is the *De Remediis Parabilibus*.

[45] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 20 (GT p. 16). This is the *Epitome Librorum Anatomicorum Marini*.

[46] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 20; (GT p. 16). This is the *Epitome Librorum Anatomicorum Lyci*.

[47] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 22 (GT p. 18). This is the *Ignorata a Lycone in Anatomia*.

[48] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 22 (Arabic); GT p. 18. This is the *Adversus Lycum*.

Commentary on the Book on Forewarning, he writes, 'In the case of this book, I have not found a copy of it up till this point.'[49]

There were other books which Ḥunayn could not find whose titles he does not even mention. The *Risāla* was, as we have already mentioned, a sort of bibliographic essay which used Galen's *Pinax*, where Galen himself had made a list of all his works, as its basis. Between entries 107 and 108 in the *Risāla*, Ḥunayn indicates that he has been unable to locate a number of them: 'As for the rest of the books which [Galen] mentions in his Catalog (*al-fihrist*, i.e., the *Pinax*), in which he follows the opinion of Hippocrates, I have not come across anything of them in Greek up till this point. Nor have I come across anything of the books which he said he composed following Aristotle, save what has already been mentioned. As for the books which he said he followed Asklepiades in, I have only found one small treatise.'[50] Another similar comment comes between entries 128 and 129 in the *Risāla*. Here we are informed of more books of Galen mentioned in the *Pinax* which were unavailable in Ḥunayn's day: 'As for the books in which he followed the example of the People of the Portico (*aṣḥāb al-riwāq*, i.e., the Stoics), I have not come across anything of them. Nor have I come across anything from the books in which he follows the way of the σοφισταί. As for the books which are shared by Grammarians and Rhetoricians, despite their abundance, I have only found one treatise of them.'[51]

[49] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 43 (Arabic); GT p. 35. This is the *In Hippocratis Praedictionum Libr. Comm.*

[50] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 45 (Arabic); GT p. 37. Meyerhof, 'New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq,' p. 722, gives the following genuine works of Galen which are not mentioned by Ḥunayn: *De Dignotione ex Insomniis*, *De Propriorum Animi Cujusque Affectuum Dignotione et Curatione*, *Quomodo Morbum Simulantes sint Dephrehendendi*, *De Substantia Facultatum Naturalium*, *De Ptisana*, *Quod Qualitates Incorporeae sint*, *De Captionibus penes Dictionem*.

[51] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 51 (Arabic); GT p. 42.

For all his mention of manuscripts he looked for or which he had never seen, Ḥunayn makes many more references to Greek manuscripts which he possesses in his personal library. Often, Ḥunayn will mention that he has a Greek copy of the text in question, but that he did not have the opportunity to translate it. For example, in entry no. 54, *On the Diagnosis of the Affections of the eyes*,[52] he writes, 'I had a Greek manuscript of it in my possession, but I did not have the free time to translate it.'[53] In the case of no. 48, *On the Organ of Smell*, he reports that he was not even able to read the text: 'I had a copy of it in Greek in my possession, though I did not have the free time to read it.' We even get a sense at times for the demand on Ḥunayn's time from different translation projects. About no. 46, *On the Opinions of Hippocrates and Plato*, he writes, 'Job translated this book into Syriac but no one else up till this point has translated it. I had a number of Greek manuscripts of it in my possession, but I was distracted from them by others.' Such statements are usually followed by curiously contradictory ones which report that Ḥunayn did in fact translate the work in question. In the case of entry 46, for instance, he adds, 'Then, I later translated it into Syriac…'[54] Similarly, in entry no. 98 on Galen's *Commentary on the Book κατ' ἰητρεῖον*, Ḥunayn informs us 'I fell into a possession of a copy of [the book] in Greek, but I did not have the chance to read it, not to mention to translate it. I do not know anyone who has translated it; a copy of it in

[52] *Fī dalā'il 'ilal al-'ayn*, I use here Meyerhof's translation of this title; cf. 'New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq,' p. 695.

[53] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 30 (Arabic); GT p. 24.

[54] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 26-27 (Arabic); GT p. 21. This is *De Placitis Hippocratis et Platonis*.

Greek is present in my library (*fī kutubī*). Then I translated it later into Syriac and I made a summary of it....'[55]

This state of affairs can be explained by the fact that the *Risāla* apparently underwent revision. In his conclusion to the book, Ḥunayn tells us that he had written the document in the year 1167 of Alexander (231 AH/AD 856) when he was 48 years old. In a sort of Postscript, he then writes that in the year 1175 of Alexander (249 AH/AD 864) he added to it what he had translated since the letter was initially composed.[56] A Post-Postscript as well as a reference to translation work done by Ḥunayn 'about two months before his death' suggests that the *Risāla* was updated even after Ḥunayn's death.[57]

Ḥunayn makes reference to having Greek manuscripts of certain books in his library more than thirty times in the course of the *Risāla*;[58] he also makes comments on the condition of the manuscripts which he used as the basis for various translations. For entry no. 28, on Galen's book *On Erasistratos' Science of Anatomy*, for instance, Ḥunayn remarks, 'No one before me had translated this book, so I myself translated it into Syriac...despite the fact that I only found one manuscript of it, full of things which had fallen out (*kathīrat al-isqāṭ*) and which was missing a small part of its end. It was only

[55] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 43 (Arabic) ; GT p. 35. This is the *In Hippocratis De Officina Medici Comment*.

[56] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 52 (Arabic); GT pp. 42-43. On detecting the different layers in the *Risāla*, see Bergsträsser's comments, pp. IX-X.

[57] For the comment about two months before Ḥunayn's death, see entry no. 61, Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 31-32 (Arabic text). For a reference to Ḥunayn's son, Isḥāq making a translation after his father's death, see entry no. 41, Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 25 (Arabic text).

[58] See, e.g., the following entries in Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq* (page numbers refer to the Arabic text): 3 (p. 5), 40 (p. 25), 44 (p. 26), 46 (p. 27), 48 (p. 27), 54 (p. 30), 55 (p. 30), 58 (p. 31), 59 (p. 31), 63 (p. 32), 65 (p. 32), 77 (p. 36), 81 (p. 38), 82 (p. 38), 89 (p. 40), 90 (p. 40), 98 (p. 43), 102 (p. 44), 104 (p. 45), 105 (p. 45), 106 (p. 45), 107 (p. 45), 114 (p. 47), 122 (p. 50), 124 (p. 50), 128 (p. 51), 129 (p. 52). Entries 47 (p. 27), 73 (p. 35), 92 (p. 41), 93 (p. 41) and 111 (p. 46) most likely also refer to Greek manuscripts in Ḥunayn's possession; no. 83 (pp. 38-39) may as well.

with great labor that I was able to extract its main points; it nevertheless turned out intelligible. My intention in it was, to the best of my ability, not to depart from the ideas of Galen.’[59] Manuscript quality, when combined with the age of the translator, could produce poor results. Of no. 43, *On Arteries: Whether Blood Flows through them by Nature or Not*, he reports, ‘I had translated it into Syriac when I was a young man, for Gabriel [b. Bukhtīshū‘]. Nevertheless, I did not trust in its accuracy, for its manuscript was a single one, full of errors. Then, [later] I finally translated it [again] into Syriac with great attention to detail.’[60] He has similar things to say about no. 108, *On the Substance of the Soul, what it is According to the Opinion of Asklepiades*: ‘I translated this treatise into Syriac for Gabriel [b. Bukhtīshū‘] when I was young and I do not trust in its accuracy since I translated it, in addition to this, from a single manuscript which was not sound (*laysat bi-ṣaḥīḥa*).’[61] A manuscript with gaps might merit brief mention, as in the case with no. 128, the *Commentary on the Second of the Books of Aristotle, called περὶ ἑρμηνείας*: ‘We have found an incomplete manuscript (*nuskha nāqiṣa*) of it,’[62] but lacunae were not necessarily a barrier to translation. Concerning no. 122, *On What Plato Said about the Science of Medicine in his book known as the Τιμαῖος*, he reports ‘I found it in Ḥarrān, though its beginning is a bit lacking (*yanquṣu qalīlan*) and I did not have the chance to translate it. Then, I later translated it into Syriac and I made complete the gap (*nuqṣan*) at its beginning.’[63]

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[59] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 22 (Arabic); GT p. 17. This is the *De Erasistrati Anatome*.

[60] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 25-26; GT p. 21. This is the *In Arteriis Natura Sanguis Contineatur*.

[61] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 45-46 (Arabic text); GT p. 37 This is the *De Substantia Animae secundum Asclepiadem*.

[62] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 51 (Arabic text); GT p. 42. This is the *In Alterum Aristotelis De Interpretatione Librum*.

[63] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 50 (Arabic text); GT p. 122. NB: ‘in Ḥarrān’ is a variant which Bergsträsser published later in *Neue Materialien zu Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq’s Galen Bibliographie* (Leipzig, 1932), p.

Ḥunayn's concern with mentioning manuscripts, translators, different translations and even the age of translators gives us a vivid picture of the process of revision and correction that went into making a translation. As we have seen, Ḥunayn would travel to acquire books and manuscripts and he seems to have been constantly on the lookout for new and better manuscripts and would correct previous translations on the basis of new evidence. In a well-known passage describing Galen's book, *On Sects* (entry no. 3), he offers the following picture of the translation history of the text: 'Galen's composition of this text was when he was a youth of thirty years or a little older, upon his first entry into Rome. Before me, a man called Ibn Sahdā, one of the inhabitants of Karkh, had translated it into Syriac. He was weak in translation. Then I translated it when I was a young man of twenty years or a little older for a doctor, among the inhabitants of Jundīsābūr, who is called Shīrīshū' b. Quṭrub, from a Greek manuscript which was full of defects (*kathīrat al-isqāṭ*). Then, after that, when I was forty or thereabouts, Ḥubaysh, my student, asked me to improve it after a number of Greek manuscripts of it had been collected and were with me. So I collated those manuscripts with one another until I had one good manuscript on their basis. Then I collated that manuscript with the Syriac and I corrected it. It is my custom to do that with everything that I translate.'[64]

23, after the discovery of another manuscript of the *Risāla*. The text Ḥunayn is here referring to *De Iis quae Medice scripta sunt in Platonis Timaeo*. The 'then later' in this passage (*thumma ... min ba'd*) is probably an addition Ḥunayn made when he updated the *Risāla* in AD 864/249 AH.

[64] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 4-5 (Arabic text) (GT p. 4), along with improvements to the text made available in *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, p. 14. This is the *De Sectis*. F. Rosenthal provides an ET of this passage in *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, trans. E. and J. Marmorstein (London and New York, 1975), p. 20. Meyerhof, 'New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq,' pp. 690-691, also provides an ET.

The collation of manuscripts to produce better and more accurate editions receives at least fifteen separate mentions in the course of the *Risāla*;[65] it was a standard part of the method of third/ninth-century translators in Baghdad. In describing Galen's book *On the Means of Recovery* (no. 20, *fī ḥīlat al-bur'*), Ḥunayn offers the following vivid portrait of what this process actually looked like: 'Sergios [of Resh'ayna] translated this book into Syriac. His translation of the first six sections happened when he was still weak and had not grown strong in translation. Then he translated the eight remaining sections after he had been trained, so his translation of them was more correct than his translation of the first sections. Salmawayh pressed me to improve the second part for him and expected that to be easier and better than translating it [anew]. So he collated part of the seventh section with me. He had the Syriac with him and I had the Greek with me and he would read out to me in Syriac. Whenever something which disagreed with the Greek would pass by me, I would tell him about it and he would begin to make corrections—until the process became burdensome for him and it became clear to him that a translation from the beginning would be easier and stylistically superior and would be better organized. So he asked me to translate those sections and I translated them entirely.'[66]

Comparing manuscripts with one another to achieve better readings, as we have seen, was a common practice. It could lead to either a revision or a new translation altogether and Ḥunayn seems to have shown a preference at times for making

[65] See, e.g., the following entries in Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq* (page numbers refer to the Arabic text): 3 (pp. 4-5), 20 (pp. 16-18), 36 (pp. 23-24), 37 (p. 24), 39 (p. 25), 53 (pp. 29-30), 68 (p. 34), 69 (p. 34), 84 (p. 39), 86 (p. 39), 88 (p. 40), 113 (pp. 46-47), 123 (p. 50), 126 (p. 51), 127 (p. 51).

[66] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 17-18 (Arabic text) (GT p. 14), with reference to *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, p. 16. This is the *Methodus Medendi*. A freer ET of this passage is available in Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam*, pp. 20-21 and also in Meyerhof, 'New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq,' pp. 692-693.

completely new translations rather than simply revising old ones. In the case of *On Simple Medicines* (no. 53), he reports 'Joseph the Priest made a poor and miserable translation of the first part—which is five sections—into Syriac. Then Job [of Edessa] subsequently translated it better than Joseph had done, but he did not execute it as he should have. Then I translated it into Syriac for Salmawayh and I exerted a great deal of effort in carrying it out. Sergios [of Resh'ayna] had translated the second part of the book and Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh asked me to collate the second part of this book and correct it, so I did, despite the fact that it would have been best to retranslate it.'[67] We hear similar things in relation to no. 24, *On the Disagreements which have occurred Concerning Anatomy:* 'Job of Edessa translated this book, but fixing it up tired me out,[68] so I retranslated it for Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh into Syriac and I produced a most excellent version.'[69] In some cases, Ḥunayn might make a collation and revision which bordered on a fresh translation, as was the situation with Galen's *Commentary on the Book of Aphorisms* (no. 88): 'Job [of Edessa] made a bad translation of it and Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū' desired an improvement of it, but instead increased its corruption. So I collated the Greek with it and improved it with a correction which resembled a translation.'[70]

In addition to the importance of discovering and collating Greek manuscripts of the works in question, a significant reoccurring theme in the *Risāla* is the production of multiple Syriac or Arabic revisions and versions of the same Greek text by different

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[67] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 30 (Arabic text); GT p. 24. This is the *De Simplicium Medicamentorum Temperamentis et Facultatibus*.

[68] *fa-a'yānī iṣlāḥahu*. Or perhaps, 'it defied my efforts at improvement.' Bergsträsser apparently found this phrase somewhat obscure. His German translation rendered it, 'es war mir unmöglich, es (diese Übersetzung) zu verbessern (?).' See *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 16 (GT).

[69] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 21 (Arabic text); GT pp. 16-17. Meyerhof ('New Light on Hunain Ibn Ishaq,' p. 693) calls this book, *De Anatomica Dissensione*, and notes 'This book is lost.'

[70] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 40 (Arabic text); GT pp. 32-33.

translators and sometimes, even by the same translator.[71] Ḥunayn's comments on entry no. 113, *On The Opinions He Believes*, provide a succinct illustration: 'Job [of Edessa] translated it into Syriac and I translated it into Syriac for Isḥāq, my son. Thābit b. Qurra translated it into Arabic for Muḥammad b. Mūsā. 'Īsā b. Yaḥyā translated it into Arabic. Isḥāq collated it with the original and I improved it for 'Abd Allāh b. Isḥāq.'[72]

Often these two points merge: the new availability of manuscripts leads to a fresh collation and a new translation or an improvement on a previous one. Concerning Galen's *On the Method for Preserving Health* (no. 84, *fī-'l-ḥīla li-ḥifẓ al-ṣiḥḥa*), for example, Ḥunayn reports, 'Theophilos of Edessa made a disgusting and bad translation of this book into Syriac. Then, I myself translated it for Bukhtīshū' b. Gabriel. At the time I translated it, I only had one manuscript available. Then, I later found another Greek manuscript, so I collated it and corrected it from the Greek.'[73] There is a similar story to tell about no. 74, *On the Powers of Victuals*: 'Sergios translated it then Job [of Edessa] and then I myself translated it for Salmawayh, at first from a manuscript that was not sound (*ṣaḥīḥa*). Later, I was interested in copying it for my son, and had gathered into my possession a number of Greek manuscripts of it, so I collated it and corrected it and produced a summary of it in Syriac, along with a number of treatises of what many of the Ancients had spoken concerning this art, which I added to it.'[74]

[71] For examples of texts with multiple versions or revisions, see, the following entries in Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq* (page numbers refer to the Arabic text): 24 (p. 21), 43 (p. 26), 49 (pp. 27-28), 53 (pp. 29-30), 55 (p. 30), 64 (p. 32), 72 (p. 35), 75 (p. 36), 87 (p. 40), 102 (p. 44), 103 (p. 44), 113 (pp. 46-47), 119 (p. 49), 120 (p.49), 121 (p. 49), 123 (p. 50), 125 (p. 51), 126 (p. 51), 127 (p. 51).

[72] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 46-47 (Arabic text); GT p. 38. This is *De Propriis Placitis*.

[73] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 39 (Arabic text); GT p. 32. This is the *De Tuenda Sanitate*.

[74] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 35 (Arabic text); GT p. 29. The one textual change to this passage included in *idem*. *Neue Materialien*, p. 21, does not change its meaning. This is the *De Alimentorum Facultatibus*.

The discovery of new manuscripts might combine with something else to spur new translations: simple bad fortune. We have already seen Ḥunayn's description of his collation of no. 20, *On the Means of Recovery*: Sergios of Resh'ayna made a poor translation, which Ḥunayn and Salmawayh began to collate and revise. Then Ḥunayn simply executed a new translation of the first part of the text. But this was only the beginning of the story. 'We were in al-Raqqa at the time of the expeditions of al-Ma'mūn' when this happened, Ḥunayn tells us. Salmawayh 'presented [the newly translated sections] to Zakariyya b. 'Abd Allāh, who is known as "al-Ṭayfūrī," when he wanted to go down to the City of Peace [sc. Baghdad] to have them copied for him. Then a fire happened in the boat where Zakariyya was and the book was burned and no copy was left of it. Then, after some years, I translated the book [again] from its beginning for Bukhtīshū' b. Gabriel and I had in my possession a number of manuscripts in Greek of its last eight sections. I collated them and established a correct version from them and translated them with the most attention and eloquence I could. As for the first six sections, I only came across one manuscript and it was a manuscript full of errors at that. For that reason, I was unable to complete those sections to the appropriate extent. Then I came across another manuscript, and I collated it with it and I improved it as much as I was able. I would devote myself to collating it a third time if a third manuscript were to happen my way, for the Greek manuscripts of this book are rare because it was not among those things read in the schools of Alexandria. This book was translated [into Arabic], from the Syriac copies which I translated, by Ḥubaysh b. al-Ḥasan for Muḥammad b. Mūsā. Then after he translated it, he asked me to look over the last eight sections for him and to correct defects I found; so I complied

with the request and did it well.'[75] In the case of *On That the Prime Mover is Not Moved* (no. 125, *fī anna al-muḥarrik al-awwal la yataḥarrak*), someone's misplacing a translation meant that a fresh one had to be made: 'I translated it into Arabic during the caliphate of al-Wāthiq for Muḥammad b. Mūsā,' Ḥunayn writes, 'After that, I translated it into Syriac and 'Īsā b. Yaḥyā translated it into Arabic because the copy which I had translated earlier had gone missing.'[76]

In the *Risāla* Ḥunayn mentions twenty-three different people who were either patrons commissioning translations or, who like his son Isḥāq or his student 'Īsā b. Yaḥyā, were connected to him in some way and as a result were the recipients of translations he made. Examining Ḥunayn's comments about the recipients of translations shows that patrons played an active role in determining how a translation was produced.

Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh, for example, was a prominent Christian physician whose family origin was in Jundīsābūr. He is reported to have served no less than six caliphs: Hārūn al-Rashīd, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn, al-Mu'taṣim, al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil. He also had an interest in translation—Hārūn al-Rashīd put him in charge of translating ancient books which were found in Amorium and Ankyra and other Byzantine cities when they were raided by Muslim armies.[77] Yūḥannā makes a number of appearances in the *Risāla* as the commissioner of a translation: Ḥunayn and his nephew Ḥubaysh b.

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[75] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 18 (Arabic text); GT pp. 14-15.

[76] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 51 (Arabic); GT pp. 41-42. This is *In Primum Movens Immotum*.

[77] For this information on Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh, see Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, pp. 246-247 and more generally, pp. 246-255. Also see, Jamāl al-Dīn Abī al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Yūsuf al-Qifṭī (Ibn al-Qifṭī), *Tārīkh al-ḥukamā'* (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 381-391. M. Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam* (Leiden, 1970), pp. 112-115.

al-Ḥasan made as many as perhaps twenty different translations or revisions of Greek for Yūḥannā. All these texts were translated into Syriac, too—none went into Arabic.[78]

Yūḥannā is unique among the patrons Ḥunayn mentions for his apparently strong preference and even demand for precise and accurate translations. When Ḥunayn mentions having made a translation for Yūḥannā, he not infrequently also mentions the pains he took to produce something with accuracy and exactness. No other patron has such comments consistently associated with his name. Concerning the book, *On Bones*, for example (no. 7), Ḥunayn reports, 'Sergios translated it into Syriac with a poor translation. Then I translated it some years ago for Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh. My intention in translating it was to plumb the depths of its ideas with the utmost detail and clarity because this man loves clear expression and constantly pushes for it.'[79] Similarly, in the case of the book *On Pulse* (no. 16), we learn that it was translated by Sergios of Resh'ayna and Job of Edessa. 'And I myself have translated this book, all of it,' Ḥunayn states, 'some years ago, for Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh, and I took great care to be clear and use fine language in it.'[80] About *On the Crisis of Illness* (no. 18), he informs us, 'Sergios translated it and some years ago, I improved it and made a great

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[78] Syriac texts translated for Yūḥannā included (page numbers refer to the Arabic text in Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*): *On Bones* (no. 7, pp. 7-8), *On Muscles* (no. 8, p. 8), *On Nerves* (no. 9, p. 9), *On Veins* (no. 10, p. 9), *On Pulse* (no. 16, p. 13), *On the Crisis of Illness* (no. 18, pp. 15-16), *On the Days of Crisis* (no. 19, p. 16), *On the Treatment of Anatomy* (no. 21, p. 19), *On the Disagreement that Takes Place Concerning Anatomy* (no. 24, p. 21), *A Book on the Anatomy of the Instruments of the Voice* (no. 34), *On the Anatomy of the Eye* (no. 35), *On the Movement of the Chest and the Lung* (no. 36), *On the Voice* (no. 38, p. 23), *On Simple Medicines* (no. 53, pp. 29-30), *On Ethics* (no. 119, p. 49). Ḥunayn does not explicitly mention a patron for the following works: *On the Dissection of Dead Animals* (no. 25, p. 21), *On Dissecting Living Animals* (no. 26, p. 21), *On Hippocrates' Science of Anatomy* (no. 27, p. 21), *On Erasistratos' Science of Anatomy* (no. 28, p. 22), *On the Anatomy of the Uterus* (no. 31, p. 22), but connects them with his translation of no. 24, which he does explicitly state was done for Yūḥannā. So far as I can tell, Ḥunayn lists no texts as having been translated into Arabic for Yūḥannā.

[79] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 8 (Arabic text); GT p. 6. This is *De Ossibus ad Tirones*.

[80] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 14-15 (Arabic text) (GT p. 12), with reference to *idem.*, *Neue Materialien*, p. 16. This is *De Pulsibus*.

effort to correct it for Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh.'[81] After giving a long description of the contents of *On Practical Anatomy*[82] (no. 21), Ḥunayn writes, 'Job of Edessa translated this book into Syriac for Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū' and I recently improved it for Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh. I took great care in correcting it.'[83] As we have already seen above, Ḥunayn tells us that he translated no. 24, *On the Disagreements which have occurred Concerning Anatomy*, for Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh and that he produced a 'most excellent version' of it for him (*takhallaṣtuhu aḥsana takhalluṣin*).[84] Entries 24-28 and 31 were apparently translated as a group for Yūḥannā by Ḥunayn,[85] speaking about no. 27, *On Hippocrates' Science of Anatomy*, Ḥunayn reports, 'Job translated this into Syriac. Then I myself translated it along with the books I mentioned before it. In completing it, I was extremely meticulous.'[86] Another prominent feature of Ḥunayn's *Risāla* is its identification of spurious works of Galen, and in his comments on no. 34, *On the Anatomy of the Instruments of the Voice*, we have examples of both Ḥunayn's critical remarks as well as more hints of Yūḥannā's expectations for translation work done on his behalf: 'This book is one section and forged in the language of Galen. It is neither Galen nor is it some other Ancient. It is, rather, the work of one of the Moderns who assembled it from the books of Galen; furthermore, the one who assembled it was weak.

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[81] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 16 (Arabic text); GT pp. 12-13. This is *De Crisibus*.

[82] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 19, *fī 'ilāj al-tashrīḥ*, lit. *On the Treatment* or *Management of Anatomy*. This is *De Anatomicis Administrationibus*, the ἀνατομικαὶ ἐγχειρήσεις.

[83] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 20 (Arabic text); GT p. 16.

[84] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 21; GT pp. 16-17.

[85] These are *On the Anatomy of Dead Animals* (25; *De Anatome Mortuorum*), *On the Anatomy of Living Animals* (26, *De Vivorum Anatome*), *On Hippocrates' Science of Anatomy* (27, *De Hippocrates Anatome*), *On Erasistratos' Science of Anatomy* (28, *De Erasistrati Anatome*) and *On the Anatomy of the Uterus* (31, *De Uteri Dissectione*). Each of these books had been previously translated by Job of Edessa and in the case of each of them, Ḥunayn states that he translated or retranslated it 'along with the preceding book,' 'along with the books which I have just mentioned,' or 'along with the rest of the anatomical books which I translated,' see Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 21-22, and emendations in *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, pp. 17-18.

[86] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 21; GT p. 17.

Nevertheless, Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh asked me to translate it, so I complied with him in that. I do not recall whether I translated it as a [new] translation or whether I [just] improved it. I do know, however, that I executed it as best I could.'[87]

The *Risāla* also shows other patrons playing an active role in determining how the translations they commission were produced; different patrons seemed to have had different preferences in terms of style and wording. Speaking about *On the Voice* (no. 38), for example, Ḥunayn informs us about its initial translation, 'I did not translate this book into Syriac and none of my predecessors translated it, but I did translate it into Arabic for Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Malik, the Wazīr, about twenty years ago. I exerted great effort in carrying out the translation, in accordance with the fine intellect that man possessed.' This was, however, the beginning and not the end of the story of this book. 'Then Muḥammad read it,' Ḥunayn continues, 'and changed many phrases in it in accordance with what he thought was better.' But different patrons might have different ideas as to what constituted good style and a quality translation, for 'Then Muḥammad b. Mūsā looked into it, and the first manuscript as well, and he selected the first manuscript and had it copied.' Because the different patrons favored different versions, there was a chance that both were now available to be read: 'I wanted to make this clear for you,' Ḥunayn tells ʿAlī, in the *Risāla*, 'so that you would know the reason for the difference between the two manuscripts, if they are present.'[88] In this case, Muḥammad b. Mūsā, also known as Abū Jaʿfar, seems to have had ideas as to what made for a better or worse translation. Just as he provides us with a fairly precise description of what the process of collation looked like, Ḥunayn also provides us with a more

[87] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 23 (GT p. 18), with reference to *idem.*, *Neue Materialien*, p. 18. This is *Vocalium Instrumentorum Dissectio*.

[88] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 24 (Arabic text); GT pp. 19-20. This is *De Voce et Anhelitu*.

detailed description of the sort of 're-writes' a patron might request if he was not entirely satisfied with the style of the work he received. Speaking about the book *On Corpulence* (no. 56), Ḥunayn lays out his usual stylistic aims as a translator. 'I translated it recently for Bukhtīshū',' he reports, 'in the manner of speech I customarily use in translating, which is, in my view, the speech which is the most elegant and vigorous and closest to the Greek without violating proper Syriac (*ḥuqūq al-suryāniyya*).' In this particular case, however, Ḥunayn's usual method produced results which were not to the liking of Bukhtīshū'. 'Then Bukhtīshū' asked me to retranslate it in language that was simpler (*ashal*) and more fluid (*aslas*) and more expansive (*awsa'*) than the first, so I did it.'[89]

Muḥammad b. Mūsā, we have just seen, could show definite predilections for certain types of style over others. He exhibits the same behavior in Ḥunayn's description of *On Withering* (no. 72). 'Stephanos translated it into Arabic,' Ḥunayn reports, 'and I corrected it in places about which Abū Ja'far had doubts and concerning which he has asked me, but I did not finish fixing it. Then I translated it into Syriac and 'Īsā translated it into Arabic.'[90] Muḥammad b. Mūsā seems to have taken a particularly hands-on approach to the translations he commissioned, even to the point in possibly engaging in the act of collation, much like Salmawayh did in the description of collation cited above. Speaking of the book *On the Powers of the Soul which Follow the Mixing of the Body* (no. 123), Ḥunayn states that he translated it into Syriac for Salmawayh and that based on this translation, Ḥubaysh translated the text into Arabic

[89] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 30-31 (Arabic text) (GT, p. 25), with reference to *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, p. 20. This is *De Plenitudine* (*Plethora*).

[90] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 35 (Arabic text); GT p. 28. This is *De Marcore* (*Marasmo*).

for Muḥammad b. Mūsā. 'It reached me that Muḥammad collated the Greek with it with Stephanos,' he reports, 'and improved it in places.'[91]

There are also indications in the *Risāla* that a patron might prefer to have a work translated piecemeal, rather than all at once. Part of what Ḥunayn had to report about the *Commentary on the Book of Aphorisms* (no. 88) has already been cited—Job of Edessa's bad translation and Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū''s failed attempt at an improvement, followed by Ḥunayn's translation of it into Syriac. The *Commentary*, however, also had a life in Arabic, and it is here that we gain a glimpse into another possible patron-translator arrangement for producing a text. 'Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, who is known as Ibn al-Mudabbir, had asked me to translate it for him, so I translated one section of it into Arabic,' Ḥunayn reports. 'Then he ordered me not to begin to translate another section until he read that section which I had translated. But the man became busy and the translation of the book was interrupted.' The project of translating the *Commentary on the Book of Aphorisms* was not over, however. Another patron stepped in. 'When Muḥammad b. Mūsā saw that section,' Ḥunayn continues, 'he asked me to finish the book, so I translated it entirely.'[92]

What 'Dark Ages'? Whence Ḥunayn?

Ḥunayn is just an example. His *Risālā* focuses on medical works and does not, for the most part, deal with philosophical or other secular types of literature. But we know that Ḥunayn was also active in translating non-medical texts as well. He translated the entirety of Aristotle's περὶ ἑρμηνείας, περὶ γένεσεως καὶ φθορᾶς and περὶ

[91] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 50 (Arabic text); GT p. 41. This is *Quod Animi Mores Corporis Temperamenta sequantur*.

[92] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 40 (Arabic text) (GT p. 33), also with reference to *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, pp. 21-22.

ψυχῆς into Syriac, as well as Book Two of the *Physics* along with Alexander of Aphrodisias' commentary and Book 11 of the *Metaphysics*; portions of Ḥunayn's Syriac translations of the Ἀναλυτικά and Ἀποδεικτικά of Aristotle survive, as well as fragments of his Syriac translation of the περὶ Ἀριστοτέλους φιλοσοφίας of Nicholas of Damascus.[93] Furthermore, Ḥunayn may also have translated Theon's commentary on the *Categories* into Syriac.[94] And there is more: we know Ḥunayn commented on Plato's *Republic*, aided in the translation of the *Laws*, translated the entirety of the *Organon* and may have also translated the Περὶ ποιητικῆς.[95] He translated other works of Plato, Porphyry, Artemiodoros, Ptolemy, Menelaos, Autolykos, Apollonios, Hippocrates and Dioscorides. And of course, Ḥunayn did more than just translate—he composed original works as well.[96] All of this, of course, is in addition to the 99 complete or partial translations or revisions of previous translations into Syriac and 43 complete or partial translations into Arabic of Galenic works which Ḥunayn carried out.[97] In fact, Ibn Abī Uṣaybīʿa lists some 111 works by Ḥunayn in Arabic.[98] These ages do not seem very Dark at all. Ḥunayn's is hardly a world where secular genres have died; on the contrary, many were still flourishing.

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[93] For this information, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der Syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), pp. 228-229.

[94] Compare the comments of Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 229 with those of W.F. Macomber, 'The Literary Activity of Hunain b. Ishaq in Syriac,' *Mahrajān li-afrām wa-ḥunayn/Ephrem-Hunayn Festival* (Baghdad, 1974), p. 554.

[95] Macomber, 'The Literary Activity of Hunain b. Ishaq in Syriac,' p. 565. For the view that the Περὶ ποιητικῆς was translated into Syriac for the first time by Ḥunayn's son Isḥāq, see O.J. Schrier, 'The Syriac and Arabic Versions of Aristotle's *Poetics*,' in G. Endress and R. Kruk, edd., *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 264-265.

[96] For a listing of Ḥunayn's extant original compositions and translations, see C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1943), pp. 224-227 and *idem*., *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, suppl. 1 (Leiden, 1937), pp. 366-369.

[97] Macomber, 'The Literary Activity of Hunain b. Ishaq in Syriac,' pp. 568-567.

[98] For lists of Ḥunayn's works based on the testimony of various medieval Arabic sources, see Samir, 'Maqāla fī 'l-ājāl li-Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq,' pp. 405-414.

An objection may be lodged at this point that my argument has been something of a dodge. Against the observation that secular genres of Greek literature for all intents and purposes stopped being written in the several centuries after Justinian, I have brought forth the counterexample of a ninth-century figure, the majority of whose work only survives in Arabic. Ḥunayn died in 873 AD (270 AH) and was in fact a younger contemporary of Leo the Mathematician (d. after 869), a figure who is seen as marking the end of the intellectual Dark Ages in Byzantium. The 'Dark Ages,' it might be argued, were already coming to an end before Ḥunayn had begun his dazzling career and he should be viewed as representing the same cultural awakening after a period of contraction that his older contemporary Leo does. Ḥunayn belongs to medieval, 'Islamic' society, it will be suggested: I have no right to claim him for Late Antiquity nor do I have any justification for saying that his *oeuvre* has any relevance to the question of the Dark Ages.

The opposite, in fact, is the case. Ḥunayn is very much a Late Antique figure and the *Risāla* is a thoroughly Late Antique document. It would be tempting to view the cosmopolitan, multilingual and sophisticated milieu of 9th century Baghdad as a beaming pulsar of intellectual activity which shone forth after the dark and sterile epoch of the seventh and eight centuries—and wrong. Ḥunayn's *Risāla*, which patiently lists the Muslim patrons who funded the extensive translation activities of Ḥunayn's lifetime, makes it evident that the particular social formation of 'Abbasid Baghdad provided an environment in which there was a thirst for Greek secular texts and an

ability to pay for them which stimulated the burst of translation activity.[99] But a demand for texts and an ability to pay for their translation are merely necessary conditions for the sort of translation activity that actually took place. Without individuals skilled and trained in medicine, philosophy and other antique arts, who were also able to move texts and ideas across linguistic lines, these demands would have gone unfulfilled. If in some profound sense Ḥunayn and his fellow translators were not deeply Late Antique, the storied Greco-Arabic translation movement never could have happened. We are not dealing with a rebirth, but rather a linguistic appropriation of something that was already there.

A moment's reflection shows that attempts to minimize the importance of the Syriac tradition of scholarship to which Ḥunayn and other translators belonged in the history of the translation movement are neither convincing nor satisfying.[100] The case of Syriac studies in Europe shows nicely what would have occurred had the hunger for Greek knowledge and texts in the 'Abbasid period not been satisfied by the presence of a living tradition stretching back to the Late Antique period that Muslim patrons could turn to and draw upon. In 1312, the Council of Vienne ordered that Hebrew, Chaldean (i.e., Syriac), Arabic and Greek be taught at Paris, Oxford, Bologna, Salamanca and the Papal Court. In each place, there were to be two lecturers for each language whose job also was to include translating texts from these languages into Latin; funds to pay for

[99] This is the point of D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early 'Abbāsid Society (2nd-4th/8th-10th centuries)* (London/New York, 1998), pp. 20-22.

[100] Gutas' otherwise excellent *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* is marred by a tendency to downplay the importance of the Syriac background to the movement.

these teaching positions were to be secured by special ecclesiastical taxes.[101] In at least some parts of England there is evidence of the tax being paid for about five years, although eventually it stopped being collected, apparently due to a lack of enthusiasm for the Council's decree among Church leaders.[102] Nevertheless, there does seem to have been instruction in Greek and Hebrew at Oxford around this time, probably done by a Jewish convert to Christianity; there is no evidence, however, for the teaching of Syriac.[103] In 1434, the Council of Basle re-affirmed the decree of Vienne about the teaching of Hebrew, Syriac, Greek and Arabic, but it had no apparent consequences in England;[104] indeed, so far as Syriac is concerned, the renewed decree must have had no effect for all of Europe—the first European to know any Syriac at all seems to have been Teseo degli Albonesi (b. 1469), who learned some Syriac in Rome from a Maronite priest named Joseph, around 1515.[105] In other words, it was not until western Europeans had direct contact with representatives of a living tradition that they were able to begin to learn Syriac.[106] A figure like Roger Bacon may have thought that Greek, Arabic, Hebrew and Syriac contained the most important texts to be had in philosophy, theology and

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[101] See R. Weiss, 'England and the Decree of the Council of Vienne on the teaching of Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac,' in *idem*., *Medieval and Humanist Greek: Collected Essays*, (Padova, 1977), pp. 68-69. Weiss understood 'Chaldean' to mean 'Syriac.' So, too, did Ugo Monneret de Villard, see *idem*., *Lo Studio dell'Islām in Europa nel XII e nel XIII Secolo* (The Vatican, 1944), p. 44. On foreign language study in Europe in the Middle Ages more generally, see B. Bischoff, 'The Study of Foreign Languages in the Middle Ages,' *Mittelalterliche Studien: Ausgewählte Aufsätze zur Schriftkunde und Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 2, (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 227-245, reference to the Council of Vienne on p. 245. B. Altaner, 'Raymundus Lullus und der Sprachenkanon (can. 11) des Konzils von Vienne (1312)' *Historisches Jahrbuch* 53 (1933), p. 217, argues that the context of the decree was clearly one in which the Catholic church was concerned about missions and attempts at union with oriental churches; attempts at understanding the Chaldean referred to in the decree as Biblical Aramaic rather than the Syriac in use by eastern churches are therefore mistaken.

[102] Weiss, 'England and the Decree of the Council of Vienne,' pp. 72-73.

[103] Weiss, 'England and the Decree of the Council of Vienne,' pp. 75-76.

[104] Weiss, 'England and the Decree of the Council of Vienne,' p. 74.

[105] See S.P. Brock, 'The Development of Syriac Studies,' in *The Edward Hincks Bicentenary Lectures*, ed. K.J. Cathcart (Dublin, 1994), pp. 95-96 and A. van Roey, 'Les débuts des etudes syriaques et André Masius,' in *V Symposium Syriacum 1988*, ed. R. Lavenant (Rome, 1990), pp. 11-12.

[106] cf. Brock, 'The Development of Syriac Studies,' p. 95

science,[107] and the Council of Vienne may have desired that Syriac be taught in leading centers of education because it would help missionary activities and would contribute to understanding the Bible,[108] but simple demand, even when money was available for patronage, was not enough to bring instruction and translations into being. The failed decrees of the Council of Vienne and then the Council of Basle show exactly where demand for texts, translations and instruction without supply leads—nowhere. Even if Maslama had been successful in conquering Constantinople in 717, the Arabs surely still would have had to have gotten their knowledge of Greek culture and history through Middle Eastern means: if one wanted to have Greek translated into a Semitic language in the early medieval period, it was the Syrians who had monopolized the market. Without the skill and knowledge of multilingual Syriac-speaking translators, familiar with the Greek tradition, the desire of ʻAbbasid elites for Greek texts would have most likely experienced the same frustration and non-fulfillment as that of the Councils of Vienne and Basle in the West.

But of course, no such thing occurred. It was not until the Maronite Patriarch Simeon sent Joseph the priest along with a sub-deacon and a deacon to the Fifth Lateran Council in Rome in 1515 that European scholarship hungry for knowledge of Syriac was able to come into contact with individuals who could satisfy that craving.[109] In the east, however, Muslim elites did not have problems of supply, for in the Syriac-

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[107] See R. Weiss, 'The Study of Greek in England During the Fourteenth Century,' in *idem*., in *Medieval and Humanist Greek: Collected Essays*, (Padova, 1977), p. 85: 'Not only did [Bacon] value [Greek] for the sake of learning, but also because he believed that all the most significant texts in theology, philosophy, or science, happened to be either in Greek or Arabic or Hebrew or Chaldean, the latter meaning of course Syriac.'

[108] Weiss, 'England and the Decree of the Council of Vienne,' p. 69.

[109] For the sub-deacon Elias and the deacon Moses who accompanied the priest Joseph, see van Roey, 'Les débuts des etudes syriaques et André Masius,' pp. 11-12.

speaking monasteries and cultural centers of Syria and Mesopotamia, Late Antiquity had never really ended. Business continued as usual.

This was not the case in Byzantium. Lemerle, for instance, could find almost no Greek manuscripts, secular or religious, from the sixth to ninth centuries. The situation in Syriac is, by contrast, quite different from that in Greek. Looking only at the 2,600 or so Syriac manuscripts preserved in Western libraries, S.P. Brock and D.G.K. Taylor were able to count 42 dated Syriac manuscripts from the sixth century, 16 dated manuscripts from the seventh century, 25 dated manuscripts from the eighth century, and 43 dated manuscripts from the ninth century.[110] It is worth observing that of the four secular Greek palimpsests from this period Lemerle was able to point to, the overwriting of two of them was in fact actually in Syriac.[111] Brock and Taylor's count only included dated manuscripts; if the survey had included manuscripts dated to certain centuries based on paleography, the number of Syriac manuscripts we possess from the sixth to ninth centuries would have been considerably higher.[112] This contrast

[110] See S.P. Brock and D.G.K. Taylor, *The Heirs of the Ancient Aramaic Heritage: The Hidden Pearl, volume II*, (Rome, 2001), p. 245.

[111] BL Add. 17,210 and BL 17,211. See Lemerle, *Byzantine Humanism: The First Phase*, pp. 82-84.

[112] S.P. Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 2nd ed., (Piscataway, NJ, 2006), p. 44, offers the following numbers of extant manuscripts or manuscript fragments, by century, for only one text (albeit an important one)—the Peshitta Old Testament: sixth century: 27 mss; seventh century: 32 mss; eighth century: 10 mss; ninth century: 12 mss. These numbers presumably include mss. dated both by explicit dating references and also by paleography. A read through Wright's *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, for example, reveals many mss. which Wright dates to the seventh century, for example, based on orthography, but which have no colophon explicitly stating when they were composed. The following mss. might be mentioned: sixth or seventh century: p. 6, Add. 14,426, Peshitta *Genesis*; p. 6, Add. 14,444 Peshitta *Genesis*; p. 12, Add. 12,172 Peshitta *Joshua*; p. 13, Add. 14,439 Peshitta *Joshua*, p. 13, Add. 14,666 (a vellum leaf) from Peshitta *Joshua*; p. 18, Add. 14,443 (fol. 35-71) *Proverbs of Solomon*; p. 18, Add. 14,443 (fol. 72-98), Book of *Ecclesiastes*, Book of *Wisdom*; p. 23, Add. 17,106 (fol. 1-73) Peshitta *Jeremiah*; p. 27, Add. 14,666 (fol. 38-46) Fragments of the Peshitta Twelve Minor Prophets; p. 27, Add. 14,666 (fol. 37), a single vellum leaf, contains part of Peshitta *Hosea*; p. 45, Add. 17,114, Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 46, Add. 14,449 Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 47, Add. 14,457 Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 47, Add. 14,458 Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 49, Add. 14,452: Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 50, Add. 12,137: Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 62, Add. 14,454: Peshitta first three Gospels; p. 63, Add. 12,141: Peshitta *Matthew* and *John*; p. 68, Add., 14,669 (foll. 29-33) part of Peshitta *Matthew*; p. 71, Add., 17,119, Peshitta *John*; p. 81, Add.. 14,472 Peshitta *Acts* and Catholic Epistles; p. 83, Add., 18,812 Peshitta *Acts* and Catholic Epistles; p. 88, Add. 14,477

between Greek and Syriac manuscripts becomes especially striking when it is remembered that while there are some 55,000 Greek manuscripts extant,[113] the number of Syriac manuscripts is considerably less—something greater than 10,000.[114] Furthermore, almost all Syriac manuscripts extant from the fifth to ninth century, including some 140 dated manuscripts, come from only one of two places: St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai and Dayr al-Suryān in the Wadi Natrun,[115] and both of these places are quite distant from the Mesopotamian heartland of Syriac. Even given a much smaller total of extant manuscripts from which to draw and a smaller number of locations to preserve them, the Syriac manuscript remains from the Byzantine 'Dark Ages' dwarf those of Greek.

Peshitta Pauline Epistles; p. 90, Add. 14,481 Peshitta Pauline Epistles; p. 90, Add., 14,669 (foll. 57-59) Fragments of Peshitta Pauline Epistles; p. 97, Add. 12,142 (foll. 1-73): *Ecclesiasticus/Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach*; p. 98, Add. 14,446 1 and 2 *Maccabees*; p. 146, Add. 17,217 (foll. 54), fragment of a lectionary; Seventh Century: p. 22, Add. 14,669, (fol. 25) vellum leaf containing Peshitta *Isaiah* 27:30-28:15; p. 24, Add. 12,136 Peshitta *Ezekiel*; p. 27, Add. 14,668 (fol. 12-19), Part of a ms of Peshitta Twelve Minor Prophets; p. 28, Add. 17,106 (fol. 74-87) Part of LXX *Isaiah*; p. 28, Add. 14,442 (fol. 1-46) *Genesis*; p. 54, Add. 14,463 Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 55, Add. 14,450: Peshitta Four Gospels; p. 68, Add.,14,669 (foll. foll 27 and 28): partial Peshitta *Matthew*; p. 92, Add. 14,468: Peshitta Pauline Epistles; Seventh or Eighth Century: p. 93, Add. 14,666 (foll. 51-55) part of Peshitta 2 *Corinthians*

[113] cf. A. Dain, *Les Manuscrits*, (Paris, 1964), p.77

[114] See Brock and Taylor, *The Heirs of the Ancient Aramaic Heritage*, p. 245: 'No estimate of the number of surviving Syriac manuscripts has ever been attempted, but it probably runs to well over 10,000; at least 3,000 are provided by their scribes with dates, and these range from November 411 (leaving aside the legal documents from 240, 242 and 243) to the present day, for Syriac manuscripts continue to be copied.' Also cf. F. Briquel-Chatonnet, 'Les manuscrits syriaques,' in *Nos sources: arts et littérature syriaques* (Antélias, 2005), p. 40, 'Le nombre des manuscrits syriaques conservés est difficile à évaluer, mais il est de l'ordre de plusiers milliers, sans doute au delà d'une dizaine de milliers.' By way of comparison, there are more than 300,000 Latin manuscripts (see Dain, *Les Manuscrits*, p. 77) and some 30,000 extant Armenian manuscripts (see C. Renoux, 'Langue et littérature arméniennes,' in M. Albert et al., eds., *Christianismes orientaux. Introduction a l'étude des langues et des littératures* (Paris, 1993), p. 109.) It should be noted that a large number of Syriac manuscripts were destroyed in the course of the late-nineteenth and early twentieth century. Yusūf al-Qas 'Abd al-Aḥad al-Bakhzānī has collected a large amount of evidence, much of it relating to the destruction and loss of Syriac manuscripts and libraries from the medieval period to the present, in his *Krūkhyo 'am ktḥobe srīṭe mbadre/Jawla ma'a makhṭūṭat suryāniyya mub'athara* (Aleppo, 1994).

[115] See Brock, 'The Development of Syriac Studies,' pp. 103-104, and Brock and Taylor, Brock and Taylor, *The Heirs of the Ancient Aramaic Heritage*, p. 245.

Dark for whom?

What we have seen is that Ḥunayn and the Syriac-speaking Christians who formed the large majority of the Greco-Arabic translators in ninth-century Baghdad[116] were operating out of a continuous and vibrant tradition of translation and study of Greek texts—both secular and religious. The Syriac-speaking intellectual world of which Ḥunayn was a part experienced no break or cultural 'caesura' like that which (so we are told) took place in Byzantine Greek literature.[117] For them, a 'Dark Age' never happened. It is only if we understand 'Byzantine literature' and 'Byzantine culture' to exclusively mean 'Greek literature' and 'Greek culture' that any assertions or statements about a certain kind of cultural sterility or discontinuity can gain any traction; but the two are in no way coterminous.

Looking to Syriac it becomes immediately evident that many of the traditional Late Antique secular genres never in fact did come to an end. There is no cultural discontinuity between what we conceptualize as the Late Antique and early medieval and 'Islamic' periods, no sharp break or decline followed by a phoenix-like rising from the cultural ashes. The *Risāla* of Ḥunayn certainly gives no evidence that Ḥunayn himself saw any such break. It seems, rather, that he saw similarity between what Christians were doing in his day and the techniques of study and instruction in the

[116] There were a few Sabians as well, e.g. Manṣūr b. Athānās (see Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 49) (Arabic text)) and Thābit b. Qurra (see Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 36, 47 (Arabic text); on Thābit, see the entry of R. Rashed and R. Morelon in *EI*[2], also, cf. K. van Bladel, *Hermes Arabicus*,(PhD diss., Yale, 2004), pp. 107-109. For the 'vast majority' of translators as Syriac-speaking Chritians—Melkites, Syrian Orthodox and members of the Church of the East, see the comments of D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London/New York, 1999), p. 136.

[117] See the comments of H. Hunger about a 'politisch-kulturelle Zäsur' taking place in Byzantium after the reign of Herakleios in *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner*, vol. 2 (München, 1978), p. 231.

famous medical schools in Alexandria. After he has listed twenty books of Galen and given their translation history, for example, Ḥunayn makes the following comment:

> These are the books to which reading was limited in the place of medical instruction in Alexandria. They would read them in the order which I have set out their mention. They would gather every day to read an important work from these and to try to understand it, just as our Christian companions today gather every day in the places of instruction which are known as 'schools' [σχολή] to [study] an important work from one of the books of the ancients. As for the remaining books, individuals would read them, each one on his own, after instruction in those books which I mentioned, just as our companions today read commentaries on the books of the ancients.[118]

A discontinuity only exists if we limit our view to Greek—where some literary genres abate while other, new ones flourish—or Arabic—which emerges in this period from relative obscurity and an almost completely oral existence to become one of the history's great written literary and scientific languages.

Syriac, by contrast, stands in a unique, intermediate relationship to these two. It both exhibits many of the new 'themes and styles' that Greek literature does and at the same time continues many of the older genres which wither away in Greek. It was Syriac-speaking Christians like Ḥunayn who, precisely because they stood in a continuous, unbroken tradition (which can be called 'Late Antique' because its genesis and development lay in Christian scholarly activity which took place in a Late Roman context), were able to render that tradition into a new idiom where it would be continued, altered and expanded. Al-Fārābī (d. 339 AH/950 AD), for example, nicknamed *al-mu'allim al-thānī*, the 'the second teacher' (after Aristotle, who was the first), had for his philosophical teacher a member of the Church of the East named Yūḥannā b. Ḥaylān (d. 910 AD); al-Fārābī in turn, was one of the teachers of the famous

[118] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 18-19 (Arabic text) (GT p. 15), along with improvements to the text made available in idem., *Neue Materialien*, p. 17. My translation, but see the ET of Gutas in *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 15.

Syrian Orthodox philosopher Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī (d. 974 AD), whose rich philosophical library was used by Ibn al-Nadīm to help write the celebrated *Fihrist*.[119] Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī and al-Fārābī were both also the students of the famous East Syrian Christian Abū Bishr Mattā b. Yūnus (d. 940 AD), the leading logician of the early tenth-century and the most important figure in Baghdādī Aristotelianism.[120] Similarly, in the field of medicine, Samir Khalil estimates that some sixty different Christian authors composed medical works in Arabic before the year 1000,[121] this out of a total of some 134 authors composing in Arabic on this subject.[122] Indeed, Christians were famous for their medical expertise. In a well-known story, al-Jaḥiẓ (d. 255 AH/AD 868-869) tells us that Asad b. Jānī was a physician. At one point, when business was bad, someone pointed out to Asad that the year had been one of plague and that disease was rampant, 'You are learned and you have patience and service, eloquence and knowledge—how have

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[119] For Yūḥannā b. Ḥaylān as teacher of al-Fārābī see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbāʾ*, p. 605; for al-Fārābī as the teacher of Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, see ibid., p. 318. On Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī and Ibn al-Nadīm, see the article on Yaḥyā written by G. Endress in EI[2] and see also F.E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus: The Oriental Translations and Commentaries on the Aristotelian Corpus* (Leiden, 1968), p. 19, n. 2. On Yaḥyā also see S. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton, 2008), pp. 122-125.

[120] See G. Endress's article on Mattā b. Yūnus in *EI*[2]; also see F. Zimmermann's helpful and informative discussion in *idem*., *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle's* De Interpretatione, (London, 1981), pp. cv-cviii, cx. Note Zimmermann's comments on al-Fārābī's relationship to his Christian teachers, p. cx: 'It would appear that al-Farabi, while following his teachers' lead in essentials, contrived to rebuke them over essentials. ... His aim in studying philosophy was to create an *Islamic* philosophy. He had no intention of being identified with what ostensibly was a Christian school of thought.' Zimmermann's comments in a footnote on the same page (n. 2) merit quoting in full: '[Al-Fārābī's] life's work was devoted to converting the illusion into a reality [with respect to creating an *Islamic* philosophy]. In his lifetime, this seems to have isolated him a little from the mainstream Aristotelian movement, which for about two generations after him was characterized by a remarkable degree of co-operation and intellectual exchange between Muslims and Christians. In 987 the *Fihrist* (262.8-14), relying on information provided by contemporary exponents of the movement, has surprisingly little to say about al-Farabi. In the following generations Muslim and Christian teaching moved apart. Al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār's recension of the *Organon* (P) quotes none but Christian authorities. Avicenna (980-1037), building on al-Farabi and rejecting the Christian school of Baghdad, finally established an emancipated, separate, Islamic tradition of philosophy.'

[121] See S. Khalil, 'La "Geschichte des arabischen Schriftums" et la literature arabe chrétienne,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 44 (1978), p. 466. For this point, cf. R. Le Coz, *Le médecins nestoriens au moyen âge* (Paris, 2004), p. 92.

[122] See F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schriftums*, vol. 3 (Leiden, 1970), pp. 203-340.

you been brought to such a business slump (*al-kasād*)?' he was asked. Asad, we are told, replied, 'In the first place, in their eyes, I'm a Muslim. Before I even practiced medicine—no, in fact, before I was born—people have believed that Muslims are not successful in medicine.' Furthermore, he went on, 'My name is "Asad." My name should have been "Ṣalībā"[123] or "Gabriel" or "John." My *kunya* is "Abū Ḥārith" and it should be "Abū 'Īsā" or "Abū Zakariyya" or "Abū Ibrāhīm." I am wearing a white cotton robe, but my robe should be black silk. My pronunciation is an Arab one,' he continued, 'but my language should be that of the people of Jundīsābūr,' referring to the Iranian city home to eminent Syriac-speaking medical doctors.[124] This was a society in which Christians enjoyed considerable cultural prestige and power. Elsewhere, al-Jāḥiẓ would acknowledge that the Christians were wealthy, that they were rulers of kingdoms, that their clothes were cleaner and their crafts more excellent.[125] Meyerhof noted that in his important biographical dictionary of doctors, *'Uyūn al-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā'*, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a has information on 130 Christian doctors in the ninth century. By comparison, in the same century we are given information on 3 Sabians, 3 Jews and 5 Muslims.[126] The large number of Christians in medicine can perhaps also be seen

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[123] sc. 'Cross.'

[124] al-Jāḥiẓ, *Kitāb al-bukhalā'*, ed. T. al-Ḥājrī (Cairo, 1967), p. 102. 'Peter' here is 'Bīrā, not Buṭrus. In his edition of *al-Bukhalā'*, Ẓāfir Kūjān (Damascus, 1963) suggests (p. 232, n. 2) that Bīra is a corruption of Bitra, i.e., Buṭrus. His list of names is different as well: Salība, Murāyl (Murā'īl), John and Bīrā (p. 232). FT available in C. Pellat, *Le livre des avares de Ğahiz*, (Paris, 1951), pp. 147-148. On Jundīsābūr, see F.R. Hau, 'Gondeschapur—eine medizinschule aus dem 6. Jahrhundert n. chr.,' *Gesnerus* 36 (1976), pp. 98-115; H.H. Schöffler, *Die Akademie von Gondischapur: Aristoteles auf dem Wege in den Orient* (Stuttgart, 1980); Le Coz, *Les médicins nestoriens*, pp. 53-66.

[125] Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Mukhtār fī 'l-radd alā al-Naṣārā* (Beirut, 1991), p. 64; also cf. p. 68. NB: Finkel's edition of this text, *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1344), p. 18, reads 'their water is cleaner' (*mā'ahum anẓaf*) rather than 'their clothes are cleaner' (*thiyābahum anẓaf*).

[126] M. Meyerhof, 'Notes sur quelques médecins juifs égyptiens qui sont illustrés à l'époque arabe,' *Isis* 12:1 (1929), p. 116. The numbers gradually shift, however, and Muslims come to predominate in the profession. Meyerhof (p. 117) gives the following numbers for subsequent centuries: 10th: 29 Christians, 4 pagans (i.e., Sabians), 6 Jews, 30 Muslims; 11th century: 4 Christians, 7 Jews and 'une grande majorité de

reflected in the exception Caliph al-Muqtadir made to an order issued in 296 AH (AD 908): no Jews or Christians were to be used in public service, save in medicine and money changing.[127] In his *Answer to the Christians* al-Jāḥiẓ noted that Byzantine women (*banāt 'l-rūm*) gave birth to Muslim rulers and that among the Christians there were theologians, doctors, astrologers, intellectuals and wise philosophers, something which was not seen among the Jews.[128]

Describing the philosophy or medicine written or practiced by such people, Christians, as 'Islamic' rather than 'Late Antique' risks obscuring as much as it reveals; moreover, it helps build a wall of separation between the Late Antique and 'Islamic' periods, supporting a false binary which makes the massive continuities between the two less apparent. Indeed, al-Jāḥiẓ's efforts to stress that Aristotle, Ptolemy, Euclid, Galen, Demokritos, Plato and others were Greek and 'neither Byzantine nor Christian'

Musulmans.' P. Pormann, 'The Physician and the Other: Images of the Charlatan in Medieval Islam,' *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 79 (2005), p. 213, remarks that '*we* must take these figures with a pinch of salt,' but does grant that 'even if we allow for a large margin of error, the figures appear to indicate,' among other things, 'in the ninth and tenth centuries, the majority of physicians were non-Muslims.' Another indication of the large number of Christians in the medical profession can be seen in Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq's account of the conspiracy plotted against him which ended with him stripped naked, beaten and imprisoned, with his wealth confiscated and his home flooded. According to Ḥunayn, the people who plotted against him were members of his family and his students (see *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 264). Later, he remarks that the people who conspired against him would come to him for help diagnosing a difficult disease, even as they schemed (i.e., they were doctors) and then states, 'I do not appeal to the Lord to judge between them and me; rather, I remain silent, for they are not one, two, or three, but fifty six men, most of them Christian and they need me while I need them not.' Translation G. Saliba (with slight modification), in *ibid*., 'Competiton and the transmission of the foreign sciences: Ḥunayn at the 'Abbasid Court,' *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 2:2 (Autumn 2000), p. 92. Arabic text in *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 266. See Saliba's article for a full discussion of the full incident and a translation of Ḥunayn's account of it (Arabic text in *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, pp. 264-271. Rosenthal thought only the broad outlines of this story had any basis in real events and thought most of it to be inauthentic; see his discussion of it in F. Rosenthal, 'Die Arabische Autobiographie,' *Analecta Orientalia* 14 (1937), pp. 15-19, especially his critical remarks pp. 18-19, and compare with Saliba's comments, 'Compettition and the Transmission,' p. 101, n. 10. What is important here is not whether the incident reported occurred precisely in all its detail, but rather the comment that most of the 56 docotors allied against Ḥunayn were Christians.

[127] See Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk miṣr wa-'l-qāhira* (Cairo, 1963-1964), vol. 3, p. 165. For this point, cf. P. Pormann, 'Islamic Medicine Cross Pollinated: A multilingual and multiconfessional maze,' in A. Akasoy, J.E. Montgomery and P.E. Pormann, edd., *Islamic Crosspollinations: interactions in the medieval Middle East* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 76.

[128] Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Mukhtār fī 'l-radd alā al-Naṣārā* (Beirut, 1991), p. 61; see also, *idem*., *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1344), p. 16.

suggests that in the ninth-century, people at the heart of the ‘Abbasid period were understanding such authors in precisely these terms. ‘They claim that the Greeks were one of the tribes of the Byzantines (*al-rūm*),’ al-Jāḥiẓ complained, ‘and so boast in their religion against the Jews and exalt themselves over the Arabs and are proud towards the Indians, to the point that they claim that our learned men are followers of their learned men and that our philosophers have copied their example.’[129]

Late Antiquity Lives On I: The Case of Philosophy

The strong cultural continuities between what are commonly conceptualized as the Late Antique and Islamic periods in the Middle East are perhaps most clear in the realm of philosophy. I have already noted the nearly complete break in the Greek philosophical tradition between Stephen of Alexandria (d. after 619/620) in the reign of Herakleios and Leo the Mathematician (d. after 869) in the ninth century; apart from a few logical compendia, the only thing that might be considered philosophy is found ‘indirectly’ in the theological works of Maximos Confessor and John Damascene. If we look to the Syriac philosophical evidence, however, the picture could not be more different from what we have in Greek. The seventh and eighth centuries witnessed a flurry of philosophical activity in the Syriac-speaking world. In the seventh century, the West Syrian Bishop Severos of Sebokht (d. 666-667 AD) was responsible for translating the commentary of Paul the Persian on the περὶ ἑρμηνείας into Syriac from

[129] See al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Mukhtār fī ’l-radd alā al-Naṣārā*, p. 62-63; cf. *idem*, *Thalāth rasā’il*, pp. 16-17. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, pp. 86-88 offers an ET of this text and more from the same passage. He understands al-Jāḥiẓ’s comments to be made against the Byzantines and as part of an anti-Byzantine and anti-Christian foreign policy of al-Ma’mūn. As al-Jāḥiẓ himself did not know Greek, was writing in Arabic and lived in an environment in which Arabic-speaking Christian scholars and intellectuals were numerous and seemed to be responding to criticisms of Islam leveled in Arabic emanating from such circles, it seems more sensible to me to understand the immediate audience for such remarks not to be Greek-speaking Christians in the Eastern Roman Empire, but rather Christians living in al-Jāḥiẓ’s immediate milieu who were making such claims of Christian cultural superiority over Arabs, Jews and Indians.

Middle Persian; Severos also was likely the translator of a logical compendium Paul the Persian composed in Middle Persian for Khusro I.[130] BL Add., 17,156 contains fragments of another Syriac commentary on the περὶ ἑρμηνείας which is anonymous but which may also be Severos' work.[131] He furthermore wrote a tract in 638 explaining the different kinds of syllogisms in Aristotle's Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα; although Severos explicitly states that such an elucidation would be very useful for a complete understanding of the ideas of Aristotle's Ἀποδειτικά, we unfortunately have no evidence of a translation or commentary by him on this book.[132] We do possess, however, letters Severos wrote on other Aristotelian topics: one to a priest named Aitīlāhā of Nineveh explaining the meaning of certain key terms in the περὶ ἑρμηνείας, and another letter written to a periodeute named Yonan, about logic.[133] In an astronomical work dating to 662, Severos would cite Plato's Timaeus.[134] Miaphysite

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[130] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 246

[131] See W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 3 (London, 1872), p. 1162. This suggestion stems from the fact that the fragments are grouped with other philosophical texts, all written by Severos.

[132] The *memra* of Severos on the syllogisms in the Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα is unedited, but Wright reproduces its introduction, where Severos makes the comment: ܣܢܝܩܐ ܠܝ ܓܝܪ ܗܘܐ. ܘܦܩܚ ܡܗܘܝܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܒܟܠܠܬܐ ܘܡܣܟܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܦܘܕܝܩܛܝܩܐ ܐܡܝܪܢ. See W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 3 (London, 1872), p. 1160. For 638 as the date of composition, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 246.

[133] For this information about Severos' works, see Baumstark, *Geschichte,* p. 246 and S.P. Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' in C. Burnett, ed., *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts: The Syriac, Arabic and Medieval Latin Traditions* (London, 1993), pp. 6, 13, 14. NB: Severos' letter to Yonan is on logic, not rhetoric, as Wright suggests in his *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* vol. 3, p. 1162. See Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' p. 6, n. 26. See also Cambridge Add. 2812, fol. 109a-116a.

[134] See F. Nau, 'La cosmographie au VIIe siècle chez les Syriens,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 5 (15) (1910), pp. 249-250; for the date, see p. 248. For other examples of Platonic citations in Syriac literature (in this case, putative Platonic citations) see, E. Lanz, 'Syrische Platonzitate in der Rhetorik des Anton von Tagrit,' in Göttinger Arbeitskreis für syrischen Kirchengeschichte, ed., *Paul de Lagarde und die syrischen Kirchengeschichte mit einem Geleitwort von Prof. D. Hermann Dörries* (Göttingen, 1968), pp. 129-134. For a quote from Plato in Syriac on the temple of the Sabians, see S.P. Brock, 'A Syriac Collection of Prophecies of the Pagan Philosophers,' *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 14 (1983), p. 210 (repr. in *idem*., *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature, Theology* (Hampshire, 1992), article VII).

Patriarch Athanasios II of Balad (d. 683-684 AD) was a student of Severos Sebokht.[135] Athanasios made a revision of a sixth-century Syriac translation of the Ἐισαγωγή of Porphyry in the year 645.[136] What is more, he made translations of Aristotle's Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα, Ἀποδειτικά, Τοπικά and Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων which are now all lost.[137] It was Athanasios who elevated Jacob of Edessa (d. 708) to the episcopacy.[138] Jacob stands out as one of the most brilliant polymaths in the entire Syriac tradition whose work covered a number of different areas. In the field of philosophy, he produced a revised translation of Aristotle's Κατηγορίαι as well as a collection of philosophical definitions with the title Ἐγχειρίδιον.[139] The latter work contains half a dozen definitions which come from Aristotle's Μετὰ τὰ φυσικά Δ, and mistakenly translating a ᾗ as the Syriac *aw* ('or'—i.e, reading ᾗ as ἤ) led Furlani to suggest Jacob had read the *Metaphysics* in Greek.[140] In his eleventh letter to John, the

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[135] cf. J.-B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, edd. and trans., *Gregorii Barhebraei: Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1 (Louvain, 1872), col. 287.

[136] On Athanasios, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 256-257. See also A. Freimann, *Die Isagoge des Porphyrius in den syrischen Uebersetzungen* (Berlin, 1897). For 645 as the year of translation, cf. Vat. Syr. 158, fol. 16 in S.E. Assemani and J.S. Assemani, *Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae Codicum Manuscriptorum*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1926), p. 306: ܫܠܡܬ ܐܣܟܡܐ ܠܗ ܕܦܘܪܦܘܪܝܘܣ ܦܝܠܣܘܦܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܡܢ ܗܘܢܐ ܠܐܝܣܓܘܓܝ ܫܠܡܬ ܐܬܬܦܫܩܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܨܝ ܗܘܐ ܠܡܦܩܘ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܡܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܒܫܢܬ ܬܫܥܡܐ ܘܚܡܫܝܢ ܘܫܬ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܒܝܪܚ ܟܢܘܢ ܐܚܪܝ. On the two translations of the *Eisagoge* in Syriac, see S.P. Brock, 'Some notes on the Syriac Versions of Porphyry's Eisagoge,' in *Mélanges en hommage au professeur et au penseur libanais Farid Jabre (Publications de l'Université libanais, section d'études philosophiques et sociales)* 20 (1989), pp. 41-50.

[137] For reference to Athanasios' lost translation of the Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων, see Kh. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* (Beirut, 1948), pp. 198-199, where Abū al-Khayr al-Ḥasan b. Siwār criticizes Athanasios for not understanding Aristotle's ideas in the text; perhaps in the same way that Ḥunayn's later and more accurate translations meant that Sergios of Resh'ayna's translations were not copied and preserved, Athanasios' translations suffered a similar fate. For Athanasios' lost translation of the Ἀποδειτικά and the Τοπικῶν see S.P. Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy from the Late Eighth Century on Translations From Greek,' *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), pp. 238, 246. In general on Athanasios' translation and commentary activity, see S. P. Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' in C. Burnett, ed., *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts* (London, 1993), pp. 4-5.

[138] See Barhebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1, col. 289.

[139] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 251, 255; S.P. Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' in C. Burnett, ed., *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts* (London, 1993), pp. 4, 5.

[140] See G. Furlani, 'Di alcuni passi della Metafisica di Aristotele presso Giacomo d'Edessa,' *Rendiconti della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Classe di Scienze Morali Storiche e Filologische* 5:30 (1921), pp.

Stylite of Litarb, Jacob cites passages from the now-lost ὁ πρὸς Νημέρτινον λόγος of Porphyry.[141] Shortly before his death, Athanasios also elevated George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes (d. 724) to the episcopacy;[142] George had quite possibly been a student of Athanasios.[143] George produced a revision of the translation of the Κατηγορίαι as well as a commentary on that work. Moreover, George translated the περὶ ἑρμηνείας and provided an introduction to it; he translated the Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα, as well, with both commentary and introduction.[144] Furlani suggested that George's commentary on the Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα indicated that he was drawing upon an unknown Greek commentator who had certain affinities with John Philoponos, but who was not in fact Philoponos.[145] In addition to these works, eleven of George's letters are still extant today. They cover a large variety of topics and I will return to them later in this

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268-273; Furlani's suggestion comes on pp. 272-273. Also, cf. H. Hugonnard-Roche, 'Jacques d'Édesse et sa reception d'Aristote,' in, *idem*., *La logique d'Aristote du grec au syriaque* (Paris, 2004), pp. 52-53. Hugonnard-Roche points out that the six definitions taken from the *Metaphysics* occur in the order which they occur in the text and suggests that he himself may have pulled the quotes out of the *Metaphysics*; he also notes the possibility that Jacob has taken them from a commentary or some sort of school handbook.

[141] See W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, (London, 1871), p. 600. Also see n. 905, below.

[142] See J.-B. Chabot, ed. *Chronique de Michel le syrien, patriarche jacobite de Antioche (1166-1199)* (Paris, 1899-1910), vol. 4 (Syriac) 446-447, vol. 2 (FT) 474. cf. Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol.1, col. 293

[143] See my, 'Between Christology and Kalām? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes,' in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), p. 674.

[144] cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 257; Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' pp. 4, 7-8. See R.J. Gottheil, 'The Syriac Versions of the Categories of Aristotle,' *Hebraica* 9 (1893), pp. 166-215; G. Furlani, 'La Versione e il Commento di Giorgio delle Nazioni all' Organo Aristotelico,' *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* n.s. 3:2 (1923), pp. 305-333; idem., 'Le Categorie e gli Ermeneutici di Aristotele nella Versione Siriaca di Giorgio delle Nazioni,' *Memorie della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, serie 6, vol. 5, fasc.1 (1933), pp. 5-68; *idem*., 'Il Proemio di Giorgio delle Nazioni al Primo Libro dei *Primi Analitici* di Aristotele,' *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 18 (1940), pp. 116-130; idem., 'Sul Commento di Giorgio delle Nazioni al Primo Libro degli *Analitici Anteriori* di Aristotele,' *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 20 (1943), pp. 47-65; *idem*., 'Sul Commento di Giorgio delle Nazioni al Secondo Libro degli *Analitici Anteriori* di Aristotele,' *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 20 (1942), pp. 229-238; idem., 'Il Primo Libro dei Primi Analitici di Aristotele nella Versione Siriaca di Giorgio delle Nazioni,' *Memorie della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, serie 6, vol. 5, fasc. 3 (1935), pp. 145-229; *idem*., 'Il Secondo Libro dei Primi Analitici di Aristotele nella Versione Siriaca di Giorgio delle Nazioni,' *Memorie della R. Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche, serie 6, vol. 6, fasc. 3 (1937), pp. 233-287.

[145] See Furlani, 'Sul Commento di Giorgio delle Nazioni al Secondo Libro degli *Analitici Anteriori* di Aristotele,' pp. 232, 238.

dissertation. For now, it suffices to point out that these letters contain explicit philosophical content, most notably when George responds to a question about the meaning of the phrases ‘major premiss’ and ‘minor premiss’ (credited as coming from ‘the Philosopher,’ i.e., Aristotle) with a discussion that includes references to the Κατηγορίαι and περὶ ἑρμηνείας.[146] To be added to this list of authors is another now-lost translation or revision of the Κατηγορίαι carried out by a certain Yonan, possibly to be identified with the Yonan the Periodeute whom Severos Sebokht wrote in the mid-seventh century about logic.[147]

Severos, Athanasios, Jacob, George and Yonan are all West Syrian, Miaphysite figures, yet there was also philosophical activity taking place among members of the Church of the East in the seventh century, though it is all unfortunately either lost or unedited. Silvanos of Qardu is an almost completely unstudied East Syrian figure of the first half of the seventh century who wrote on the Ἐισαγωγή, Κατηγορίαι and περὶ ἑρμηνείας.[148] ‘Anānīsho‘ was a classmate of the Catholicos Isho‘yahb III (ord. 628; d. 643, 644, or 646) at the School of Nisibis. Thomas of Marga’s *Book of Governors* informs us that once ‘Anānīsho‘ came to live in the Monastery of Beth ‘Ābe, ‘Rabban ‘Anānīsho‘ the wise of understanding labored so hard in the study of books that he surpassed all who were before or after him in his knowledge.’[149] In the monastery, ‘Anānīsho‘ lived an ascetic

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[146] See BL Add. 12,154, fols. 273b-275a (11.2.1-11.2.8 in my edition and translation). Also, see George’s very Aristotelian comments at section 6.1.14 (fol. 244b) and sections 13.1.3-13.1.4 (fol. 284b)

[147] The translation is referenced in the scholia to Paris BN Arabic 2346, cf. Kh. Georr, *Les Catégories d’Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* (Beirut, 1948), pp. 180 and 380. Georr understands the name of the translator he refers to as ‘Yubâ,’ but H. Huggonnard-Roche, ‘Sur les versions syriaques des *Catégories* d’Aristote,’ *Journal asiatique* 275 (1987), pp. 219-220, suggests the name should be read as ‘Yūnān’, i.e., Yonan, and suggests that this might be the same Yonan written to by Severos Sebokht. For all this, see Brock, ‘The Syriac Commentary Tradition,’ p. 3, n. 2 and p. 4, n. 8

[148] cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 197.

[149] Translation, Budge in E.A.W. Budge, trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Margâ A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p.177. For the Syriac, see *idem.*, *The Book of Governors:*

life of silence. An ascetic life, however, did not preclude him from engaging in philosophical pursuits: ‘The noble ‘Anānīsho‘ composed definitions and divisions of various things, [sc. ὅροι and διαιρέσεις[150]] which were written on the walls of his cell. And when his brother Mar Isho‘yahb came to pray in this monastery, and saw the division of the sciences of philosophy of his brother ‘Anānīsho‘, he begged him to write a commentary on them for him, and send it to him, which ‘Anānīsho‘ actually did. And he wrote to him a clear exposition in many lines from which will be apparent to everyone who reads them the greatness of his wisdom.’[151] In this same century, we furthermore know from ‘Abdisho‘ bar Brika’s fourteenth-century verse catalogue of Syriac writers that the East Syrian Catholicos Ḥnanisho‘ I (d. 699-700 AD) composed a commentary on ‘the *Analytics*.’[152]

The writers surveyed thus far are for the most part seventh or early eighth century figures. This by no means indicates that philosophical activity came to a halt in the Syriac-speaking world after the death of George of the Arabs in 724. Indeed, philosophical translation and writing continued throughout the eighth century. According to ‘Abdisho‘, Mar Aba II of Kashkar, an East Syrian Catholicos, wrote a

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The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 79: ܟܕ ܕܝܢ ܐܬܐ ܠܥܘܡܪܐ ܗܢܐ: ܘܫܠܡ ܒܫܠܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܢܗܓܐ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ: ܗܘ ܦܠܛ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܬܚܘܡܐ ܕܚܠܬܐ: ܕܝܢ ܚܢܢܝܫܘܥ ܚܣܝܢ ܗܘܢܐ. ܕܠܥܠܡܘܢ ܕܐܬܚܙܘܗܝ، ܘܟܬܒܗ ܢܒܪ ܒܥܘܡܠܬܘܬܗ NB: I have altered Budge’s spelling of names.

[150] For this, see A. Baumstark, *Aristoteles bei den Syrern vom V.-VIII Jahrundert* (Leipzig, 1900), p.212.

[151] Translation, Budge in *idem*., trans., *The Book of Governors*, vol. 2 pp. 177-178. Syriac text, in *The Book of Governors*, vol. 2, pp. 79-80: ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܠܚܢܢܝܫܘܥ ܚܣܝܢܐ ܦܘܠܓܐ ܘܬܚܘܡܐ ܕܡܕܡ ܡܕܡ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܪܫܝܡܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܥܠ ܐܣܬܐ ܕܩܠܝܬܗ. ܟܕ ܕܝܢ ܐܬܐ ܐܚܘܗܝ، ܡܪܝ ܝܫܘܥܝܗܒ ܕܢܨܠܐ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܗܢܐ: ܘܚܙܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܦܘܠܓܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ ܦܝܠܘܣܘܦܘܬܗ ܕܐܚܘܗܝ، ܚܢܢܝܫܘܥ ܒܥܐ ܡܢܗ ܕܢܦܫܘܩ ܠܗ ܘܢܫܕܪܝܘܗܝ. ܘܥܒܕ ܠܗ ܗܝ ܕܐܦ ܥܒܕ NB: I have altered the spelling of names and removed Budge’s archaisms. NB: Baumstark, *Aristoteles bei den Syrern*, p. 212, places this incident in 645 AD. On ‘Anānīsho‘, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 201-202.

[152] i.e., the Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα and the Ἀναλυτικὰ ὕστερα See J. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3 (Rome, 1725), p. 154: ܦܘܫܩ ܐܢܠܘܛܝܩܐ. On Ḥnanisho‘, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 209.

commentary on the entirety of Aristotle's logic;[153] Bar Hebraeus notes that Mar Aba was 'skilled in ecclesiastical books and logic' and that 'he was always occupied in the reading of books.'[154] If we believe the report that Aba was 110 years old when he died in 751 AD, then he would have been a contemporary of Jacob of Edessa and George of the Arabs.[155] The Maronite Theophilos of Edessa (d. 785 AD) was perhaps born in 695 AD and would have been in his teens when Jacob of Edessa died and in his twenties when George of the Arabs died. By the late 750s, Theophilos was part of the entourage of the Caliph al-Mahdī. Theophilos eventually became al-Mahdī's chief astrologer and is possibly best known for his astrological writings, though he also produced a Syriac translation of the σοφιστικοὶ ἔλεγκοι which eventually served as the basis for two later Arabic translations of the same work.[156] Theophilos also apparently produced a translation of the Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα.[157] David bar Paulos was a West Syrian figure who was probably born in the region of Nineveh in the middle of the eighth century or perhaps a little before;[158] his literary remains include a commentary on the

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[153] See Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. 3, p.154: ܐܒܐ ܟܫܟܪܝܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܦܘܫ̈ܩܐ ܥܡ ܐ ܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܘܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܡܠܘܠܘܬܐ ܟܠܗ ܕܐܪܝܣܛܘܛܠܝܣ. 'As for Aba of Kashkar, he has commentaries, as well as letters, and a commentary on all of the logic of Aristotle.' Note that 'Abdisho' has two separate entries on Aba, one as Aba of Kashkar (p. 154) and one as Aba bar Brīk Ṣebyāneh (p. 157); see W. Wright's comments, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894/repr. Piscataway, NJ, 2001), p. 187. On Aba, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 214-215.

[154] See *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 3, col. 153. ܡܗܝܪ ܗܘܐ ܓܝܪ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܥܕܬ̈ܢܝܐ ܘܡܠܘܠܘܬܐ ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܐܬܐܘܠ ܠܟܘܗ ܘܟܠܗ ܙܒܢܗ ܒܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܥܣܝܩ ܗܘܐ. (I have corrected typos in Abbeloos and Lamy's edition here). For this point, cf. W. Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894/repr. Piscataway, NJ, 2001), pp. 186-187.

[155] On Aba, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 214.

[156] See Kh. Georr Kh. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* (Beirut, 1948), p. 31. On Theophilos see R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 400-409 and Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 341-342.

[157] Referred to in glosses on Paris Ar. 2346, see Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 190.

[158] See I.E. Rahmani, *Studia Syriaca seu collectio documentorum hactenus ineditorum ex codicibus syriacus*, vol. 1 (Charfeh, 1904), p. 67.

Κατηγορίαι.[159] Among the extant works of Isho‘bokht, the East Syrian Metropolitan of Rev-ardashir, who was active during the Catholicate of Ḥnanisho‘ II (sed. 773/774-779/780 AD), is a treatise entitled ‘the Ten Categories’ written to ‘lovers of instruction’ who had constantly been asking him about ‘certain things among the books of the philosophers,’ especially about ‘the ten kinds of categories.’[160] This is probably the same Isho‘bokht who wrote a philosophical tract on potentialities.[161]

Ḥnanisho‘ II, whose catholicate is used to date the life of Isho‘bokht[162] was succeeded as East Syrian Catholicos by Timothy I in 780 AD. Timothy would serve as the head of the Church of the East until his death in 823. Like many of the names I have mentioned thus far, Timothy was a polymath with broad interests. Among Timothy’s literary remains are a collection of 59 letters, only about two-thirds of which have been edited and published. On the basis of two of these letters, one written about 782/783 AD (no. 43) and the other in 799 AD (no. 48), we know that the Caliph al-Mahdī commissioned Timothy to help translate the Τοπικά into Syriac and Arabic.[163] In the

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[159] See E. Sachau, *Die Handschriften-verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1899), p. 331, c, (Berlin Syr. 88). On David bar Paulos, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 272-273. Also see A. Barsoum, *al-Lu’-lu’ al-manthūr fī tā’rīkh al-‘ulūm wa-’l-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (repr. Glane, Holland, 1987), pp. 325-329. S.P. Brock, ‘From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning,’ in N. Garsoïan, T. Matthews and R. Thomson, edd., *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*, (Washington, DC, 1982), pp. 24, suggests that David bar Paulos may have been an important link between Syrian Orthodox philhellenes of the seventh century like Jacob of Edessa and East Syrian scholars in ‘‘Abbasid Iraq.

[160] See W. Wright, *A Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1901), p. 638, no. 7 (Cambridge Syr. Add. 2812) ܘܠܪ̈ܚܡܝ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܫܠܡ. ܐܚܝ ܡܢ ܕܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܫܐܠܝܬܘܢ ܠܝ ܥܠ ܡܕܡ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܦܝܠܣܘܦܐ. ܘܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܥܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܥܣܪܐ ܓܢ̈ܣܐ ܕܩܛܝܓܘܪ̈ܝܣ. On Ishobo‘kht, also see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 215-216.

[161] See E. Sachau, *Die Handschriften-verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin* (Berlin, 1899), p. 332, no. 32 (Berlin Syr. 88).

[162] For the *floruit* of Isho‘bohkt, see E. Sachau, ed., and trans., *Syrische Rechtsbücher*, vol. 3, (Berlin, 1914), p. IX. For the dates of Ḥnanisho‘ II, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 215

[163] See S.P. Brock, ‘Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy from the Late Eight Century on Translations from Greek,’ *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), p. 233. The Syriac text of these letters can be found in H. Pognon, *Une version syriaque des aphorisms d’Hippocrate*, (Leipzig, 1903), pp. xvi-xviii, xxi-xxii.

course of *Letter 43*, Timothy also refers to several other philosophical works available in Syriac, the first one, complete, which 'gives the opinion of all the earlier philosophers and sets out the Ideas and Platonic Forms,' and the second one, incomplete, which 'begins by speaking of matter, species, and negation, following Aristotelian teaching.'[164] The same letter perhaps indicates that there existed by Timothy's time Syriac translations or scholia of some kind on the Περὶ ῥητορικῆς and Περὶ ποιητῶν, or that these texts were being read in Greek in Syriac-speaking monasteries.[165]

The Syriac philosophical tradition continued after Timothy—I have already mentioned in passing Yūḥannā b. Ḥaylān, Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī, Abū Bishr Mattā and to their names could be added others—Abū Nūḥ, Timothy's secretary who worked with him on the translation of the Τοπικά and who also translated philosophical works from Greek into Arabic,[166] Isoʻdnah of Basra, a mid-ninth century East Syrian who wrote a treatise on logic,[167] Abū Yaḥyā al-Marwazī, the teacher of Abū Bishr,[168] and of course, Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq, to name only several.[169] Furthermore, recently (re)-discovered manuscripts at Dayr al-Suryān in Egypt hold the promise of new philosophical material in Syriac re-

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[164] Trans. Brock, 'Two Letters of Patriarch Timothy,' p. 237. Brock, p. 243, was unable to identify the first treatise.

[165] See Brock, 'Two Letters of Patriarch Timothy,' p. 236 (also see below), though NB, Brock, pp. 241-242, could locate no other solid evidence for the existence of Syriac translations of these books in this time. Timothy's request that scholia or commentaries on these books be sought at the Monastery of Mar Mattai, 'whether in Syriac or not' (see below) is taken by John Watt to mean that Greek commentaries were most likely present at the Mar Mattai. See J. Watt, 'Al-Fārābī and the History of the Syriac *Organon*,' in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), p. 761.

[166] The first three books of the *Organon* and a Greek collection on the Ἐισαγογή—see Brock, 'Two letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 241. Also see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 218.

[167] See 'Abdisho''s verse catalog in Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. 3, p. 195, ܦܘܣܩܐ ܕܡܠܝܠܘܬܐ. On Isho'dnah, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 234.

[168] See Peters, *Aristotles Arabus*, p. 18, n. 13, quoting *al-Fihrist*, 'He was a Syrian and everything he wrote on logic and other subjects was in Syriac.'

[169] In general, Brock's 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' is an excellent and indispensible guide to Aristotelian philosophy in Syriac.

emerging into the light of day.[170] My argument thus far, however, requires that I go no further than Timothy, for with Timothy we at last reach the lifetime of Ḥunayn, who was born ca. 809 AD.[171] Unlike the Greek philosophical tradition leading up to Leo the Mathematician, which had essentially ground to a halt, the Syriac philosophical tradition from Late Antiquity to Ḥunayn's 'Abbasid Baghdad remained continuous, unbroken and flourishing.

Not just a tradition, a *living* tradition

I have spoken of the Syriac philosophical tradition as being a 'living' one. To demonstrate this, more is needed than a mere listing of scholars who wrote on philosophical topics in Syriac and the dates, sometimes approximate, in which they lived. We need evidence that later scholars knew of the work of earlier ones and were using the earlier work as a stepping-off point for their own. Unfortunately, because so much fundamental work of textual editing and analysis remains to be done in the field of Syriac philosophy, such evidence cannot be easily adduced in the quantities that one would like; indeed, because some texts are only known to us through references in other works, we will never be able to know the precise relationship between certain writers and the broader philosophical tradition in Syriac. Nevertheless, even given the greatly underdeveloped state of research into this subject, we do have indications that later authors in the Syriac philosophical tradition were aware of earlier ones and were

[170] See S. Brock and L. van Rompay, 'The Syriac Manuscripts of Deir al-Surian: Some First Impressions,' *Newsletter of the Levantine Foundation* 1 (2006), p. 4: 'Ms. 22 is another manuscript which received some attention in our May campaign…these ninety-four folios (distributed over 10 quires) at an unknown point in time were bound together with a most remarkable collection of thirty-two folios, taken from five different manuscripts, mostly of the 9th and 10th centuries. The content of these folios is Greek philosophy, a field in which Syriac Christians were very much interested. While some of these texts are known from other Syriac manuscripts and have been the subject of recent scholarship, others seem to be unique. They refer to various Greek philosophers and commentators of Plato and Aristotle, and deal with such topics as the origin of matter and the nature of the human soul.'

[171] i.e., 194 AH. See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 263.

self-consciously continuing and responding to their work. In other words, we have evidence that more than just a continuous tradition, we are dealing with one which is connected, breathing, changing and growing.

The first thing that can be pointed to to indicate the continuous, inter-connected nature of the philosophical tradition is the existence not just of translations of Greek philosophical works, but of *revised* translations. We have already seen in the *Risāla* of Ḥunayn that Ḥunayn frequently revised and corrected previous translations; he in fact sometimes seemed to have a preference for a completely new translation as opposed to a revision. I will return to this point, but at the moment it will suffice to observe that Ḥunayn's impulse toward revision of previously executed translations is a characteristic hallmark of the Greco-Syriac tradition, one which appears in a number of different genres—in translations of medicine, as evidenced by Ḥunayn's *Risāla*, but also in theology and perhaps most famously, in the area of Biblical translation. Philosophy was no different. An anonymous translation of the Κατηγορίαι made in the sixth century was revised in the seventh by Jacob of Edessa.[172] The Ἐισαγωγή was translated into Syriac in the early sixth century; this same translation was later revised by Athanasios of Balad in the seventh.[173] Furthermore, Sergios of Resh'ayna quotes a translation of the Ἐισαγωγή in his introduction of logic in a version which is similar to yet not identical to the anonymous early sixth-century translation of that text.[174] Because texts have been lost and because we lack proper studies of the nature of the connections between different versions of texts, it can be difficult to know which texts

[172] Cf. H. Hugonnard-Roche, *La logique d'Aristote*, 'Introduction,' p. 12.

[173] See S.P. Brock, 'Some notes on the Syriac translations of Porphyry's Eisagoge,' in *Mélanges en hommage au prof. et penseur libanais Farid Jabre (Publications de l'Université libanaise, Section des études philosophiques et sociales)* 20, 1989, pp. 44-46.

[174] Cf. Brock, 'Some notes on the Syriac translations of Porphyry's Eisagoge,' pp. 42-43, 46.

were fresh translations and which texts were revisions of previously executed translations. Whether revision or new translation, however, Syriac philosophical texts underwent constant translation and re-translation between the sixth and tenth centuries. The Κατηγορίαι were translated perhaps as many as five times between the sixth and ninth centuries.[175] The Περὶ ἑρμηνείας had at least three different translations.[176] The Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα was translated some five times.[177] The Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα had between three and five different translations.[178] There were at least three Syriac translations of the Τοπικά.[179] Finally, there were at least three different translations of Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων in this period.[180]

It has become common for scholars to assert that only part of the *Organon* was ever available in Syriac; in the case of at least some of them, making this point serves as part of a larger program of giving credit for Syriac translational activities to ʻAbbasid patronage and minimizing the Syriac tradition's internal interest in philosophical

[175] Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' pp. 3-4 lists an anonymous translation as well as the revisions by Jacob of Edessa and George of the Arabs, in addition to lost translations by Ḥunayn and Yonan.

[176] Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' p. 4 lists an anonymous translation, an extant translation by George of the Arabs and a lost translation by Ḥunayn.

[177] See Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' p. 4. This includes an anonymous, partial translation, a lost translation by Athanasios of Balad, and a translation by George of the Arabs. Paris Ar. 2346 contains glosses which also refer to translations by Theophilos and Ḥunayn which are no longer extant: see Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 190.

[178] Athanasios of Balad made a lost translation of this (see below, n. 198). We also have reference to a partial translation by Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and a full translation by his son Isḥāq b. Ḥunayn. Furthermore, Paris Ar. 2346 states that its translation of the Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα was done by Abū Bishr b. Mattā 'from the Syriac,' which may refer to another, otherwise unknown translation (See ʻAbd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū* (Cairo, 1949), p. 407). Paris Ar. 2346 also has two marginal glosses which refer to the translation of a 'Marāyā,' (see Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 2, p. 379, n. 9 and vol. 2, p. 443, n. 3; this may have been another Syriac translation. On the version of Marāyā, see R. Walzer, 'New Light on the Arabic Translations of Aristotle,' p. 99 in *idem*., *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, (Oxford, 1962). For all this, see Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' p. 5 and Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, pp. 17-18. See also Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 195.

[179] See Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' p. 5 and Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, pp. 20-23. These were by Athanasios, Abū Nūḥ (who collaborated with Timothy I—see Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' pp. 235-236) and Isḥāq

[180] See Brock, 'The Syriac Commentary Tradition,' p. 5 and Peters, *Aristotles Arabus*, pp. 23-26. These three translations were by Athanasios, Theophilos and Abū Bishr Mattā (d. 940 AD).

activity. But such an assertion is simply wrong. It is worth emphasizing, therefore, that by the end of the life of Athanasios of Balad (d. 686), some seven decades before the beginning of the ʻAbbasid era, the entire *Organon* was available in Syriac—not just the first three books plus the Ἐισαγωγή.[181] These activities of translating, revising and re-translating were going on well before the descendants of al-ʻAbbās rose to supreme political power in the Middle East.

A brief yet palpable glimpse of what exactly I mean by continuous and living philosophical tradition and of the awareness later commentators and translators had of the work of earlier ones can be found in the two letters of the Patriarch Timothy I to which I have already referred. *Letter 43*, written to Pethion, the head of a 'Nestorian'[182] school northeast of Mosul,[183] amounts to a shopping list of texts that the Nestorian Patriarch wants Pethion to try to lay his hands on. Timothy began his letter by telling Pethion that the Caliph al-Mahdī had commissioned him and Abū Nūḥ to translate the Τοπικά and that the task of translation was now done. Nevertheless, he was still

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[181] Gutas mistakenly suggests that only the first three books of the *Organon* plus the Ἐισαγωγή were available in Syriac before the "Abbasid translation movement. See *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 22. F.E. Peters makes the same assertion in *Aristotle and the Arabs: The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York and London, 1968), p. 58. Also cf. Zimmermann, *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise*, p. xcvii. John Watt has shown that there were two separate traditions of philosophical study in Syriac. The first, more common one, focused on the Κατηγορίαι, Περὶ ἑρμηνείας, and Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα (through I.7); a similar focus on the first several books of the *Organon* can also be found among Late Antique Latin authors and is not in fact unique to Syriac at all. Watt suggests that the similarity in both the Syriac and Latin traditions goes back to the 'Greek scholastic tradition.' Syrians were merely studying the same things that everyone else was studying and interested in during the Late Antique period. There was, however, another tradition which was interested in studying the later books of the *Organon* as well, which is evidenced in the translation of these books into Syriac: the Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα, the Τοπικά and the Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων. For this and more detailed analysis, see J. Watt, 'Al-Fārābī and the History of the Syriac *Organon*' in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz, (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), pp. 752-758.

[182] Because of its common usage at a both popular and scholarly level, I will sometimes use the adjective 'Nestorian' to describe East Syrians or members of the Church of the East. The adjective, however, is an historically and theologically problematic one. See S.P. Brock, 'The "Nestorian" Church: A lamentable misnomer,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 78 (1996 [1997]), pp. 53-66.

[183] The School of Mar Abraham in Bashosh—see Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 240

interested in getting hold of material related to the Τοπικά and other Aristotelian works. This is why Timothy had written to Pethion. 'Let your Eminence sagely ask and enquire whether there is some commentary or scholia by anyone, whether in Syriac or not, to this book, the *Topika*, or to the *Refutation of the Sophists*, or to the *Rhetorika*, or to the *Poetika*; and if there is, find out by whom and for whom (it was made), and where it is.'[184] These questions about authorship, patronage and even location of manuscripts bear uncanny resemblance to the sorts of questions that, as we have already seen, Ḥunayn was trying to offer in his *Risāla*. We can safely assume that these concerns were not unique to either Timothy or Ḥunayn or to the 'Islamic' period, they were part of a common manuscript culture which stretched back to the Late Antique period. This is a point I will return to below.

Though the head of the Nestorian Church, Timothy had no problem seeking manuscripts from or using the scholarship of rival, competing communions: 'Enquiries on this,' he continued, 'should be directed to the Monastery of Mar Mattai.' Recognizing the delicacy of the situation, however, Timothy cautioned, 'but the enquiries should not be made too eagerly, lest the information, (the purpose of the enquiry) being perceived, be kept hidden, rather than disclosed.'[185] Mar Mattai was a prominent Miaphysite monastery and as the leader of a competing and rival communion, Timothy's enquiries would not be met with openness, hence his exhortation to discretion. The riches of Mar Mattai's library crop up more than once in Timothy's letters: in *Letter 9*, he writes to Sergios the Doctor, 'Enquire what books are

[184] Translation Brock. See 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 236.
[185] Translation Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 236.

there at Mar Mattai and let me know about them; enquire about rare books, as many as you can, and let me know.'[186]

At the level of scholarship, however, there seems to have been something of a 'Republic of Letters' in Timothy's day, operating above the animus of sectarian strife—not only does Timothy want books from a Miaphysite monastery, he has also been in conversation with Job, the Chalcedonian Patriarch, about scholarly aids to the study of Aristotle's works: 'Job the Chalcedonian,' he writes, 'told me that he has seen a small (number) of scholia on the *Topika*, but only, he said, on certain chapters. But let your Chastity doubly enquire about scholia or a commentary on these books.'[187]

Timothy was interested in more than just the Τοπικά. He also needed the remainder of the homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, as translated by Paul of Edessa and revised by Athanasios of Balad: 'Send us the other volume of Athanasios, so that we can copy it out. We have the first.'[188] Then there was need for several other philosophical texts on natural principles, which I have mentioned already above: 'Search out to see if these treatises can be found.' Timothy also wanted Nemesios of Emesa's *On the Nature of Man*: 'Search out for a work by a certain philosopher, called Nemesios, on the structure of man.' Finally, not only did he want the work of (Pseudo-)Dionysios, Timothy also had a preference for certain translators: 'Please search out and copy for us Dionysios in the translation of Athanasios or that of Phokas.'[189]

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[186] Cited and quoted by Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 242.
[187] Translation Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 236.
[188] Translation Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 237. I have altered the spelling of the name 'Athanasios' here.
[189] Translation of all these passages by Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 237. I have altered the spellings of the names 'Nemesios,' 'Dionysios' and 'Athanasios.'

Timothy was operating in the same tradition of scholarship as Ḥunayn, one which stretched back without interruption for centuries, well into the Late Antique period. There was no discontinuity or break. Like Ḥunayn and the rest of the scholars I have mentioned thus far, there was no 'Dark Age,' nor were they engaging in scholarly practices or activities that differed greatly from what their predecessors had been doing before the Islamic conquests. Striking in Timothy's letter is the co-existence of interests in both secular and religious texts: Jacob of Edessa, Athanasios of Balad, and Ḥunayn, among others, were all similarly involved in translating both religious and secular texts from Greek into Syriac or Arabic. Timothy was aware of what and of who had come before him and was keen to learn from and benefit from the fruits of the labors of previous scholars—regardless of their ecclesiastical affiliation: like Athanasios, Phokas, the translator of (Pseudo-) Dionysios was another member of the Miaphysite church.

Phokas, whose work Timothy was eager to profit from, has also, like Timothy, left us a precious witness to the rootedness and sense of organic connection with the toil of those who came before that Syriac scholars operated out of. There was a self-consciousness and self-awareness of continuity at work. BL Add. 12,151, dated to 804 AD, contains a note written by a Phokas bar Sergios of Edessa, a Syrian Orthodox translator, probably of the later seventh century[190]—in other words, the Phokas Timothy referred to in *Letter 43*—in which Phokas speaks about both his reasons for

[190] On Phokas, see A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), pp. 271-272. See also Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 244 and *idem*., 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique,' in *III° Symposium Syriacum 1980*, ed. R. Lavenant, (Rome, 1980), p. 10. Brock, 'Jacob of Edessa's Discourse on the Myron,' *Oriens Christianus* 63 (1979), p. 21, is able to date his translation of Pseudo-Dionysios to perhaps ca. 684-686 AD. For a similar point, though less precise in dating (only to before Jacob's death in 708 AD), cf. W. Strothmann, *Das Sakrament der Myron-Weihe in der Schrift* De Ecclesiastica Hierarchia *des Pseudo-Dionysios Aeropagita in syrischen Übersetzungen und Kommentaren*, vol. 2, (Wiesbaden, 1978), pp. XIX-XX.

translation as well as the history of Greek translation into Syriac and the effects it has had on the language. Ironically enough, though Phokas speaks of a desire to make the texts he translates understandable to the reader, he himself writes in a dense, Hellenizing Syriac:

> ...placing my trust in God who says 'The one who seeks shall find and the one who asks shall receive and for the one who knocks, it shall be opened unto him' [Mt. 7:7], [I will say the following:] not because I am diligent to obtain glory for myself through such things, or to find fault with that one's[191] education. It is only that I show clearly—so that the mind of the reader not be darkened from the very beginning of the work's narration (that is, from the first encounter [with the text]) by the difficulty and complexity of words with the result that he has no profit by reading them—that either while condescending [to use] the Syriac language and being diligent in everything to make plain the things which are stated, [Sergios] in certain places made his phrasing obscure, or perhaps, as it seems to me, because at that time, many people were still not fully trained in this art of translating from the Greek language, until the point when the age progressed and brought forth through the passage of its generations other lovers of toil [sc. φιλόπονοι], like the holy and blessed ones Athanasios, Patriarch of Antioch and Jacob, the bishop of Edessa who, through their ability smoothed this road as much as possible and who, after a fashion, married to the two languages. From their union, they begat beneficial fruits, along with other [translators] before them who are still unnamed. Thereafter, the craft [of translating] was polished and bright and through their care, they obtained for the Syrians unusual turns of phrase from the precision of the Greeks.[192]

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[191] Sergios of Resh'anya, the first translator of the work into Syriac.

[192] For the Syriac text, see Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, (London, 1871), p. 494 and G. Wiessner, *Zur Handschriftenüberlieferung der syrischen Fassung des Corpus Dionysiacum* (Göttingen, 1971), p. 199. ܒܪ ܣܡܟܬ ܬܘܟܠܢܐ ܕܝܠܝ: ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܡܪ܆ ܕܕܒܥܐ ܡܫܟܚ܆ ܘܕܫܐܠ ܢܣܒ܆ ܘܠܕܢܩܫ ܡܬܦܬܚ ܠܗ. ܘܗܕܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܡ̇ܢ ܕܠܡܫܬܒܚܘ ܒܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܚܦܝܛ ܐܢܐ: ܐܘ ܠܪܕܘܬܗ ܕܗ̇ܘ ܠܡܚܣܪ ܒܗ: ܠܐ ܗܘܝܬ. ܐܠܐ ܕܐܚܘܐ ܢܗܝܪܐܝܬ. ܕܐܘ ܒܪ ܡܬܚܫܒܬ ܚܡ ܠܒܥܐ ܩܘܪܝܢܐ: ܘܡܟܠܠܒܝܬ ܡܬܚܫܟ ܕܫܘܥܝܬܗ, ܐܝܟ ܕܡܬܐܡܪ̈ܢ: ܥܡܘܩܗ̇ ܒܕܘܢ ܕܘܢ ܠܡܠܠܘܬܗ: ܕܠܐ ܒܪ ܡܢܗ ܕܥܘܪ, ܥܡܩܗ̇ ܕܡܬܚܒܘܬܐ ܘܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܬܐܡܪ ܡܢ ܦܘܓܥܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ: ܠܟܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܗܘܢܗ ܕܩܪܘܝܐ ܒܥܣܩܘܬܐ ܘܦܠܘܪ̈ܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܐ: ܕܠܐ ܡܘܬܪܢܐ ܢܬܗܢܐ ܠܗ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܐܘ ܟܒܪ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܬܚܙܐ ܠܝ. ܕܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܦܬܐܝܬ ܒܟܠ: ܐܬܪ̈ܕܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܣ̈ܓܝܐܐ ܒܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܥܕܡܐ ܕܒܗ̇. ܟܕ ܡܬܩܕܡ ܗܘܐ ܙܒܢܐ. ܘܒܫܘܚܠܦܝܗܘܢ, ܠܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܪ̈ܚܡܝ ܥܡܠܐ ܝܠܕ ܗܘܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܛ̈ܘܒܢܐ. ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ. ܘܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ؛ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܒܚܝܠܗܘܢ ܫܦܝܘܗ̇ ܠܐܘܪܚܐ ܗܕܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܨܝ ܗ̇ܘ. ܘܗܘܘ [ܒܟܢܐ] ܡܕܡ ܬ̈ܪܘ ܚܢܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܠܫ̈ܢܐ. ܘܡܢ ܢܩܦܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܘܠܕܘ ܦܐܪ̈ܐ ܡܘܬܪ̈ܢܐ. ܥܡ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܬܘܒ ܠܐ ܡܫ̈ܡܗܐ ܕܩܕܡܝܗܘܢ. ܘܗܝܕܝܢ ܡܬܡܪܩܐ ܘܡܬܢܗܪܐ ܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ. ܘܩܢܝܘ ܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܚܬܝܬܘܬܗ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܦܘܢ̈ܝܐ ܠܐ ܡܥ̈ܝܕܢܐ ܠܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ (Brackets indicate a reading I have taken from Wright's edition over Wiessner's). The Syriac of this passage is rather obscure and I have tried to be as literal as possible; I am most grateful to Yossi Witztum for his insights into the meaning of this particular text. See the less-literal FT of M. van Esbroeck in *idem*., 'La triple preface syriaque de Phocas,' in Y. de Andia, ed., *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident* (Paris, 1996), p. 172. P. Sherwood gives a summary, brief

Phokas' comments highlight yet another sense in which Ḥunayn and the other Greco-Syriac and Greco-Arabic Christian translators of the 'Abbasid period were operating in a continuous, Late Antique tradition: apart from texts and ideas, there was the sheer fact of language and translation technique.

Ḥunayn has been credited for literally changing the Arabic language, for introducing into it constructions and possibilities of expression which had previously not existed and for helping to fashion a scientific vocabulary that is still in use today, over a thousand years later,[193] but when he and other Greco-Arabic translators, the large majority of whom, as I have already noted, were Syriac-speaking Christians, approached the task of translating Greek works into Arabic, they had the benefit of the experience and achievements of nearly half a millennium of Greco-Syriac translation activity to draw upon to help them deal with the host of translational issues which confront the translator seeking to render a Greek text into a Semitic language.[194] To be sure, Ḥunayn's achievement was a great one, but it was enabled by centuries of work by translators before him. Syriac-speaking scholars were themselves aware of the moulding that their language had undergone in order to make it a better vehicle for Greek texts. Indeed, Jacob of Edessa, possibly a friend of Phokas of Edessa,[195] who

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discussion and partial ET in his 'Sergius of Reshaina and the Syriac Versions of the Pseudo-Denis,' *Sacris Erdiri* 4 (1952), pp. 181-183.

[193] M. Ullmann, *Islamic Medicine* (Edinburgh, 1978), p. 9, observes that Ḥunayn 'introduced analytical-syntactical constructions which made Arabic into an instrument capable of expressing complicated and abstract ideas. This creation of a language is a philological achievement of the first order...' On the Greco-Arabic translators' development of an Arabic scientific vocabulary and style that continued to be in use into the twentieth century, see D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (London/New York, 1998), pp. 136-141, esp. p. 141, n. 53 and the literature cited therein.

[194] For some of these problems, cf. R. Le Coz, *Le médecins nestoriens au moyen âge* (Paris, 2004), p. 90. In general, see also, S. P. Brock, 'The Syriac Background to Ḥunayn's Translation Techniques,' *Aram* 3 (1991), pp. 139-162.

[195] See S.P. Brock, 'Jacob of Edessa's Discourse on the Myron,' *Oriens Christianus* 63 (1979), p. 21

explicitly credited Jacob in the passage quoted above with helping to make the Syriac language more precise through neologisms, also recognized the effect that translation and re-translation was having on the Syriac language. Writing a letter on orthography to scribes, Jacob counseled them not to reject new or strange words because they did not know their meaning. In offering his prescription, Jacob also gave some historical perspective on the development of Syriac vocabulary:

> Neither ܕܝܠܝܬܐ, *a property*, nor ܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ, *property*, was known a hundred years ago to the Syriac language, and is certainly not found among the Syrian Doctors, viz. Mār Ephraim, Mār Jacob, Mār Isaac, or Mār Philoxenos, nor in any of those *books*, which in those times were translated from the Greek; neither was ܐܝܟܢܝܘܬܐ, *quality*, known, nor the noun ܐܘܣܝܐ, ουσία. But instead of ܕܝܠܝ̈ܬܐ, they said ܢܝܫܢܝ̈ܬܐ; instead of ܐܝܟܢܝܘܬܐ, *quality* or *species*, ܙܢܐ; instead of ܐܘܣܝܐ, they put either ܟܝܢܐ or ܐܝܬܘܬܐ, or, as for the most part, they said ܐܝܬܝܐ.[196]

Syriac-speaking scholars themselves were aware of the development and sharpening of the tool of their language as an instrument for conveying and reflecting accurately Greek expressions and ideas and this is a theme that has been picked up by modern scholars. Sebastian Brock has written of the stages that Greco-Syriac translation passed through between the fourth and seventh centuries—renderings became increasingly literal, even to the point of woodenness—and Syriac authors appropriated Greek style to the point that one cannot be certain whether some texts were originally written in

[196] Translation G. Phillips, with slight modification, in *A Letter by Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa, on Syriac Orthography* (London, 1869), pp. 7-8. Syriac text, pp. ܝܐ-ܝܒ, ...ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܗ ܗܝ ܕܐܬܐܡܪܬ: ܕܡܫܘܕܥ ܠܒܢܝܬܐ ܕܬ̈ܪܬܝܢ. ܐܦܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܗܝ ܕܕܝܠܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܕܕܝܠܝܘܬܐ ܝܕܝܥ ܗܘܐ ܩܕܡ ܡܐܐ ܫ̈ܢܝܢ ܠܗܕܐ ܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܠܗܘܢ ܠ̈ܡܠܦܢܐ ܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ ܗܢܘܢ: ܠܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ. ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ، ܐܘ ܠܡܪܝ ܐܝܣܚܩ. ܘܡܪܝ، ܐܟܣܢܝܘܣ ܐܘ ܡܪܝ، ܐܦܠܘܟܣܝܢܘܣ: ܐܘ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܦܫܝܩܝܢ: ܐܘ ܐܝܟܢܝܘܬܐ: ܐܘ ܫܡܐ ܕܐܘܣܝܐ: ܐܠܐ ܚܠܦ ܗܘ ܕܕܝܠܝ̈ܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ: ܢܝܫܢܝ̈ܬܐ. ܚܠܦ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܟܢܝܘܬܐ ܙܢܐ. ܚܠܦ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܐܘܣܝܐ ܐܘ ܟܝܢܐ ܣܝܡܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܐܘ ܐܝܬܘܬܐ. ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܣܓܝ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ.

Syriac or in Greek.[197] Indeed, it was the constant honing and increasing sophistication of Syriac translation technique and the changing standards of what was considered an acceptable and good translation that in part fueled the constant revisions and re-translations that are so characteristic of Syriac translation history.

The reliance of ʻAbbasid-era translators on the translational insights and technique of their predecessors can again be illustrated from a letter of Timothy I, his *Letter 48*, written to Sergios, the Metropolitain of Elam in 183 AH (799 AD). The letter centers on the meaning of the word αὐλητρίδες in Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα I.13. Timothy and others had found it somewhat delphic and recourse had to be made to a seventh-century Syriac translation, by Athanasios, to clarify what precisely the word meant:

> *Aulētrides* does not mean 'playing' or 'drunkenness', or even 'wine presses'; (no), they are '(flute-) playing women'. We learnt this first of all from the translation that Athanasios made of the *Apodeitikē*, [sc. the Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα] from Greek into Syriac; there he wrote '(flute-) playing women' corresponding to *aulētrides*. Later we also (learnt it) from the Book of the *Topika*, for there he everywhere puts '(flute-) playing' for *aulētridion*, and '(flute-) playing women' for *aulētrides*.[198]

As in the case of *Letter 43*, we here have evidence of earlier translations and commentaries being studied and used by later scholars to help them in their own translational and philosophical activities. One alternative to looking to earlier translations for help in understanding obscure words was to seek the help of

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[197] See Brock's classic piece, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning,' in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Byzantium in the Formative Period*, edd. N. Garsoian, T. Mathews and R. Thomson (Washington, DC, 1982), pp. 17-34. In 'The Syriac Background to Ḥunayn's Translation Techniques,' p. 145, Brock adds a fourth period or stage to the famous three periods of Greco-Syriac translation activity outlined in 'From Antagonism to Assimilation,' in order to include the Greco-Syriac translations which occurred in ʻAbbasid Baghdad.

[198] Translation Brock, 'Two letters of Patriarch Timothy,' p. 238. I have altered the spelling of 'Athanasios' here.

contemporaries who knew Greek well. For Timothy, as for others,[199] this meant asking the Chalcedonians: 'Nevertheless your eminence should be aware,' he writes,

> that the word [sc. αὐλητρίδες] is a strange one and unusual, even in Greek, as I believe. For when we were translating the book of the *Topika* into Arabic from Syriac, we had with us some Greeks, and one of them was the Patriarch of the Melkites; only with difficulty could they understand the word, and the fact that they accepted (the translation) '(flute-) playing women' was either the result of our happening upon it in the translation of Athanasios, or as a result of their own achievement.[200]

Timothy's *Letter 48* was written 113 years after the death of Athanasios in 686 AD and like his *Letter 43*, it discloses a world where Nestorian, Miaphysite and Chalcedonian Christians worked together and read one another's scholarship, regardless of sectarian affiliation. Secular genres have hardly died here, but at the same time, Timothy's interest in reading *Christian* texts produced by members of the rival Miaphysite church show that a certain secularism, or perhaps ecumenism, existed in spheres outside of the traditional secular areas like philosophy or medicine where one might expect to find them.[201] It should perhaps come as no surprise that we possess a letter from about this time, written by Ephrem, the Nestorian Metropolitain of Elam to Gabriel b.

[199] Brock, 'Two Letters of Patriarch Timothy,' p. 246, notes that when Bar Bahlul defines the Greek word *orarion* in his lexicon, he states that he sought help from the Melkites for its etymology. Cf. Bar Bahlul, *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano Bar Bahlule*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1901), col. 87: 'I asked many of the Melkites concerning it, but they did not know its translation. Nevertheless, one said...'

[200] Translation Brock, 'Two Letters of Patriarch Timothy,' p. 239. I have altered the spelling of the name 'Athanasios' here. See Walzer, 'The Arabic Translations of Aristotle,' in *Greek Into Arabic*, pp. 105-106 for discussion of how this was rendered in Abū Bishr's Arabic translation (as 'singing and its instruments'). See also, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 2 (Cairo, 1949), p. 351, n. 4 for the Arabic gloss which refers to the Syriac translation rendering αὐλητρίδες as *mughanniyyāt*, 'singing girls.' This instance of Athanasios having better knowledge of Greek than Timothy's contemporaries should be kept in mind when reading Gutas' assertion, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 138, that 'It is therefore inaccurate to say or infer that Greek culture "flourished" in the monasteries and Christian centers before the first century of Islam, and that the Graeco-Arabic translation movement simply drew upon the pre-existing knowledge of Greek of the Christians. The translators were forced to improve their knowledge of Greek beyond the level of previous Syriac scholarship.' Here we have a case where the previous Syriac scholarship had a superior knowledge of Greek.

[201] NB: This predates by more than a century the 'Nestorian Humanism' that Zimmermann speaks about among the Baghdad Aristotelians. See *Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise*, p. cxii, for an illuminating and brief description of the interfaith and ecumenical nature of the philosophical enterprise which existed in Baghdad over the course of four generations.

Bukhtīshū‘ (d. 827 AD/AH 212), on the question of whether it was permissible to take the Eucharist of the Romans (i.e., Melkites) or the Jacobites (i.e., Miaphysites). Ephrem's answer, which begins by explicitly invoking syllogistic reasoning and goes on to list a host of other reasons why the Melkites are not Orthodox ('not because they hate Severans...even Arians hate Manichees and they are not Orthodox at all!'[202]), ends with an ominous warning: 'He who takes of their Eucharist is excommunicate. Be careful, therefore, and warn others!'[203] Intercommunion in this period was apparently taking place at more than just the intellectual level.

The Paris *Organon*[204]

One last document can be brought forth to indicate the lack of discontinuity between the Late Antique and 'Islamic' periods in the Syriac philosophical tradition and the artificiality of schemes of historical periodization which seek to separate the two: the famous Paris *Organon*. The rich glosses of Paris Ar. 2346 are the scholarly equivalent of the icons which stare at worshippers in an Orthodox church: they give one a strong sense of a great communion of saints (or scholars, as the case may be), watching over one as one reads through the text. These glosses and colophons were published in part by Khalil Georr[205] and 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī[206] and analyzed in a famous article by

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[202] cf. Mingana 587, fol. 359b, ܦܣܝ، ܡܩܘܡ ܐܘ ܐܚܝ. ܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܣܢܝܢ ܠܣܐܘܝܪ̈ܝܢܐ ...ܐܦ ܐܪ̈ܝܢܐ ܣܢܝܢ ܠܡܢ̈ܝܟܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܦܘܡ ܗܢܘܢ ܐܪ̈ܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ.

[203] Mingana 587, fol. 360a. ܡܢ ܠܗ ܕܢܣܒ ܡܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܗܘܢ: ܡܫܡܬܐ ܗܘ. ܐܙܕܗܪ ܗܟܝܠ ܘܙܗܪ ܠܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ

[204] I am grateful to John Watt for alerting me to the importance of this text and its glosses.

[205] Kh. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes* (Beirut, 1948), published the Arabic glosses of the Κατηγορίαι: (text): pp. 361-386, (FT) pp. 149-182. He also published glosses from the same ms. of the following books: Περὶ ῥητορικῆς (pp. 186-189), Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα (pp. 190-193), Ἐισαγωγή (pp. 193-194), Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα (pp. 194-195), Τοπικά (pp. 195-197) and Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων (pp.198-200).

[206] See 'Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vols. 1-3 (Cairo, 1948-1952): Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα (vol. 1, pp. 101-306; Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα (vol. 2, pp. 307-465); Τοπικά (Bks. 1-6: vol. 2, pp. 467-672; Bks. 7-8: vol. 3, pp. 673-733); Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων (vol. 3, pp. 735-1018); and Ἐισαγωγή (vol. 3, pp. 1019-1068).

Richard Walzer[207] and they show nicely how the Late Antique Syriac philosophical tradition which began in the sixth century was still flourishing deep into what is usually regarded as the 'Islamic' Middle Ages.

Like sediment layers which disclose the history of a body of water, the glosses of the Paris *Organon* are not dissimilar to Ḥunayn's *Risāla*: only these allow one to see the history of the philosophical tradition, not the medical tradition. The curtain is pulled back and we see later scholars relying upon and disagreeing with the work of scholars who have come before them. The snapshot we are given, however, is at a different point than the one we receive in the *Risāla*. If in the *Risāla* our time split comes in the mid-ninth century, in the *Organon*, we are now in the tenth and eleventh centuries.[208] Peters refers to three phases of the Baghdad translation movement. The first phase, before the reign of the Caliph al-Ma'mūn (813-833 AD/197-218 AH), was characterized by a literal approach to translation. The second period centered around Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq and his associates and witnessed the use of a smoother Arabic style in the rendering of texts. In the third phase, ca. 900-1020 AD, translations executed in the first period of the translation movement were revised and refined and there was an increasing focus on ideas in understanding and teaching the concepts in the texts.[209] The Paris *Organon* is a product of this third period. The conversation is still going on, though the surroundings are now different from what they were in the seventh or eighth or even ninth centuries.

[207] R. Walzer, 'New Light on the Arabic Translations of Aristotle,' pp. 60-113 in *idem*., *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy*, (Oxford, 1962)

[208] cf. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, pp. 62, 65-66.

[209] See Peters, *Aristotle and the Arabs*, pp. 59-61.

This conversation is moreover still very much an 'ecumenical' one. In the same way we saw the Nestorian Timothy I seeking out Miaphysite scholarship and turning to Chalcedonians for learned advice, the scholarship reflected in Paris Ar. 2346 operates above the fray of sectarian division. This is the Baghdad of Zimmermann's 'Nestorian Humanism.'[210] Here, the Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα is based on the Arabic translation of the Melkite Theodore Abū Qurra (d. ca. 830 AD).[211] The manuscript as it now exists was written in 1018 AD (408 AH) and is a copy of the autograph of the Nestorian al-Ḥasan b. al-Suwār (d. after 1017). Ibn Suwār's copy was itself based on the autograph of his teacher, the Miaphysite Yaḥyā b. 'Adī (d. 974) and a marginal note indicates that the autograph of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī which Ibn Suwār was copying from had at least in part been written in 929 AD (317 AH). Furthermore, to make the pedigree of the text even more complicated, it seems that the choice of using the translation of Theodore Abū Qurra for study and comment, and not that of somebody else, went back to the Nestorian Abū Bishr, Yaḥyā b. 'Adī's teacher.[212] In other words, what we have is a Melkite translation, transmitted with the glosses of a Nestorian and his Miaphysite teacher who commented on a particular translation because the Miaphysite's own teacher, a Nestorian, preferred it. More than two hundred years of translation and commentary by Christians of all stripes are reflected in this one manuscript. We are dealing with a tradition in which separated ecclesiastical communions do not mean separated scholarly ones.

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[210] See above, note 201.

[211] See Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 1, p. 101.

[212] For 317 AH as the date of Yaḥyā finishing reading the Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα through the seventh chapter, see Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 1, p. 132, n. 1 and also Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 190 (with FT). For all this information about the history of the text and Abū Bishr as the one responsible for the selection of Abū Qurra's translation as school 'textbook,' see Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, pp. 77-78.

Ibn Suwār and the other group of scholars we now confront no longer knew Greek as Ḥunayn or Athanasios did: they only knew Syriac and Arabic. Nevertheless, many of the scholarly practices and attitudes which were so evident in Ḥunayn's *Risāla* are on display here as well.[213] Ḥunayn, as we saw in the *Risāla*, was constantly collating and seeking out new Greek manuscripts. Ibn Suwār did not have the ability to collate with the Greek, but this did not stop him from collating the various Syriac and Arabic versions which were available to him. The marginal notes, as Walzer pointed out, of Ibn Suwār's edition of the Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα contain 56 references to different Syriac translations of the same text; reference is also made two times to other Arabic versions and on 18 different occasions, other editions of the same translation of Abū Qurra are cited.[214] Jacob of Edessa is cited here[215] and Athanasios of Balad, as we will see in a moment, was known as well.

Like Ḥunayn, Ibn Suwār could criticize the work of scholars who came before him. In Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα I.3, 25b1.17, Abū Qurra translates the Greek ('ἡ δ' ἐν μέρει ἀντιστρέφει') correctly: *wa-ammā al-juz'iyya, fa-tan'akisu*—'As for the particular, it converts.' Ibn Suwār, however, in a note, informs us that the early ninth-century Melkite, Yaḥyā b. al-Biṭriq[216] has gotten this wrong: 'In the translation of Ibn Biṭriq,' he writes, '[it is]: "as for the particular, it does not convert." (*fa-lā tarji'ū*) He has made an

[213] cf. R. Walzer, 'Islamic Philosophy,' p. 7 in *idem*., *Greek into Arabic: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1962), p. 7, 'A third school of translators, who, however, did not know any Greek, used the Syriac translations of the school of Ḥunain very freely for their Arabic versions and followed the same standards of philological accuracy, discussing variants of earlier Syriac or Arabic versions. They built up a definite syllabus for the study of Aristotle, consisting of translations selected from version prior to Ḥunain and also versions emanating from his school.'

[214] See Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 94, for this information.

[215] Jacob's translation of the Κατηγορίαι is cited, see, Kh. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 380 (Arabic), p. 174 (FT). He is called 'Jacob the Ascetic.' (Ya'qūb al-Zāhid)

[216] On whom see the article, s.n., by F. Micheau in *EI*[2].

error.'[217] As I have already pointed out, however, references to Syriac versions are more common than references to Arabic ones in this particular book. So, for example, after the beginning of Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα I.4, 25b.1.27-31, Ibn Suwār gives the alternate translation of the same passage by Theophilos of Edessa and notes: 'this agrees with the translation of Athanasios [of Balad]. But Ḥunayn agrees with Theodore [Abū Qurra].'[218] A passage a little further along in the Ἀναλυτικά πρότερα (I.4, 26a1.31) elicits the following observation about previous versions: 'This section has strong disagreement in the Syriac translations. In the translation of Theophilos [of Edessa] and Athanasios [of Balad] it is in this way,' Ibn Suwār notes, giving an alternate rendering, 'But,' he continues, 'in the translation of Ḥunayn, it is in this way,' then offering Ḥunayn's translation.[219]

Athanasios of Balad, whose work had been an important resource for Timothy in understanding the Τοπικά did not receive the same measure of respect from Ibn Suwār, who offered a rather harsh assessment of the quality of Athanasios' translation of Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων in his colophon to that book:[220]

> The translator, in the process of rendering the meaning, must understand it in the language into which he is translating, to the point that he can conceptualize [the meaning] in the same way the person stating it conceptualizes it and also must know how to use the language from which he translates and into which he translates. Since the monk Athanasios did not understand the ideas of Aristotle, there is no doubt that defects entered into his translation. Furthermore, since those—whose names have been mentioned—who translated this book into Arabic from the Syriac translation of Athanasios did not have a commentary on it, they relied on their understanding in [trying to] grasp its ideas. Each was

[217] See Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 1, p. 112.18 and p. 112, n. 5. Also see Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 85, whence I have taken the Greek text. Also, I have relied on and slightly altered Walzer's ET.

[218] See Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol.1, p. 113.33-36 and p. 113, n. 4. Cf. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 85.

[219] Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 1, p. 116.30-33 and p. 116, n. 2. See Walzer's discussion, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 86. He notes that nearly all the important variants between the Syriac versions can also be found in Greek mss.

[220] Which was copied into in Paris Ar. 2346. See Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 3, p. 1017.

> diligent in trying to attain the truth and grasp the aim which the Philosopher intended, and so they altered what they translated into Arabic from the translation of Athanasios.

But this is not all Ibn Suwār has to say. The note continues, amounting to something of a history of the Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων's reception in ninth and tenth century Baghdad. We are offered an example of one such person who followed the Syriac without a commentary:

> Therefore, because we wanted to become acquainted with what was available to each one of them, we have written out all of the translations which have come into our possession in order to study each one and so that recourse can be made to one against the other in grasping the meaning. The virtuous Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī wrote a commentary on this book. I have seen a large part of it: its size is about two-thirds of [the book], in Syriac and in Arabic. I think he completed it, but it was not among his books after his death and I have had various thoughts about this situation. Sometimes I think that he destroyed it because it did not please him; at other times, I think that it was stolen—and this is my stronger supposition. He made the aforementioned translation of this book before he wrote a commentary on it and for this reason a certain amount of difficulty attaches itself to his translation, since he did not have full control over the meaning [at that time] and therefore followed the Syriac in his translation.

But Ibn Suwār had more than just Athanasios of Balad and Yaḥyā b. ʿAdī available to him in his study of the Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων. There were others as well:

> In this time of ours there is a commentary on [the Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων] by Alexander of Aphrodisias, in Greek. A quire in its beginning is defective[221] and only a bit of it has been excerpted. It has also reached me that Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm b. Bakkūsh[222] translated this book from Syriac to Arabic and that he would meet with Yūḥannā the Greek priest and geometer, who is known as Ibn Fatīla, in order to improve passages in it based on the Greek: but [a copy of it] has not come into my possession. It is also said that Abū Bishr, may God have mercy on him, corrected the first translation and made another translation, but it has not come into my possession, either. I have written down this statement so that the person into whose possession this book falls will

[221] Read *taʿjizu* with Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 3, p. 1018 against Georr's *yaʿjiru* (*Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 199). Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 200, translates it, 'le premier fascicule a été détruit.'

[222] For this vocalization, see Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 3, p. 1018.

> know the nature of its affair and the reason for my recording all the translations in the way which they are written [here].[223]

The similarities between these kinds of statements by Ibn Suwār and the sorts of comments made by Ḥunayn in the *Risāla* are striking. There is a common critical awareness of the translational tradition as well as a similar philological approach. Ḥunayn gave us a vivid portrayal of how he collated Galen's *On the Means of Recovery* with Salmawayh: here, Ibn Suwār speaks of Ibrāhīm b. Bakkūsh meeting with Yūḥannā the priest and geometer to do precisely the same thing. The colophon to the Ἐισαγωγή, contained in the same manuscript, offers another witness to this common practice. After informing us that the book was translated by Abū 'Uthmān al-Dimashqī, a final line states: 'collated with a copy read before Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, and it agreed.'[224]

Other marginal notes speak of collational activities as well. The colophon to the Ἀναλυτικά ὕστερα informs us that Abū Bishr Mattā 'translated [it] from Syriac into Arabic' and that the manuscript in question had been 'transcribed from a copy of al-Ḥasan b. Suwār' which was in turn 'collated with a copy written from the copy of of 'Īsā b. Isḥāq b. Zar'a which was transcribed[225] from a copy of Yaḥyā b. 'Adī and it was also found to agree with it.'[226]

Paris Ar. 2346 actually contains more than just the *Organon* of Aristotle and the Ἐισαγωγή. It contains the Περὶ ῥητορικῆς and the Περὶ ποιητικῆς as well. The former

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[223] For this text, see Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, pp. 198-199 (FT: pp. 199-200), and Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 3, pp. 1017-1018. The two editions should be compared with one another, cf. the comments by Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 83. On the history of the Περὶ τῶν σοφιστικῶν ἐλέγχων in Arabic and for information on the translators named in these passages, see Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, pp. 23-26.

[224] See Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 193 (with FT). Text also available in Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 3, p. 1068.

[225] *al-manqūla*, Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes*, p. 195, translates this as 'collationnée.'

[226] Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 2, p. 465. See also Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote dans leurs versions syro-arabes*, p. 195, which contains a FT.

contains the notes of the logician Abū ʻAlī b. al-Samḥ (d. 1027), like Ibn Suwār, a student of Yaḥyā b. ʻAdī. Ibn al-Samḥ, too, was a Christian, and most likely earned his bread by working as a bookseller.[227] Like Ibn Suwār and Ḥunayn and others, Ibn al-Samḥ collated manuscripts in the course of producing his copy of the Περὶ ῥητορικῆς. 'You must know,' he writes in a marginal note,

> that I copied this manuscript from an Arabic copy. As for whatever I found in it that I doubted, I would go back to a sound Syriac copy. I would look at whatever had to be fixed, would correct it and write it down corrected in this copy. When I got to this point in copying, I found in it: "The first section of this book is complete." But I found in the Syriac and in another Arabic copy much material from the first section, so I have written it down. With it, the first chapter is complete...[228]

In another marginal note, written in the margin of the third section of the Περὶ ῥητορικῆς, Ibn al-Samḥ offers the following description of the manner he went about putting his text together:

> This book is not very useful...for the art of logic, for its study and it has not paid it [sc. logic] satisfactory regard. For this reason, there does not exist for it a sound copy or concern to correct it.[229] And I found a very defective copy of it in Arabic and I also found another copy of it in Arabic which was less defective than that, so I decided to make this copy from this second manuscript. [For] whatever error I found in the second manuscript, I would go back to that [first] copy. If I found it correct, I would copy what I found to be sound. But if I found it to be defective and ... I would return to a Syriac manuscript. If I found it sound, I would record it on [this manuscript's] margin. But if I found it defective, I would record it, despite its defectiveness[230] and I would make a mark like this [s] on the line on which it was. So I collated this copy and I was diligent that no imperfections should occur in its text. Let everyone know that.[231]

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[227] For this, see S.M. Stern, 'Ibn al-Samḥ,' *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1/2 (1956), p. 32. For Ibn al-Samḥ as a bookseller, see p. 32, n. 2.

[228] Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 186 (also contains a FT).

[229] *nuskha ṣaḥīḥa aw maʻnā bi-taṣḥīḥihā*, which Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 188, translates as 'un exemplaire correct ou corrigé minutieusement.' Yossi Witztum has suggested to me that this should be translated as no 'one interested in correcting it.'

[230] *wa-in wajadtuhu saqīman uthbituhu ʻalā suqmihi*. I am grateful to Luke Yarbrough and Yossi Witztum for help understanding the Arabic here. Cf. also the translation of Georr *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 188: 'si je la trouvais fausse, je ne faisais aucune correction.'

[231] Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 188. Ellipses reflect ellipses in Georr's text.

Ḥunayn had relied on Greek texts. Now, Syriac translations came to take the role of Greek in being the court of last resort when there was a problem in the Arabic versions. This can also been seen in the note written at the end of the second section of the Τοπικά. 'I found at the end of this section,' it reads, 'something which says the following:'

> "In this section there are a small number of places which we have translated according to what the literal meaning of the words required when we were unsure about the [exact] sense [of the passage] (*wa-lam yaṣiḥḥ lanā ma'nāhā*). We would examine the passage again and would indicate what seemed to be its correct sense to us. It was copied[232] from the copy of al-Ḥasan b. Suwār, which he corrected from copies which he had examined that were based on [a copy of] Abū Bishr:[233] when [he encountered] disagreement between manuscripts, he went back to the Syriac and he fixed [the translation] according to what the Syriac manuscripts required."[234]

Written below this, in a different hand is another note which gives one more layer to the history of the text:

> The first section, along with the second, was collated with an ancient manuscript whose copyist mentioned that he wrote it out in the year 298 (AH =910 AD) from the corrected original exemplar, which had been translated from the Greek and that he had collated the two sections against it and that they had been collated with the Greek as well and been found correct by that measure, for the two were also in agreement [with the Greek].[235]

From Timothy I in the late eighth century, through the ninth and tenth-century world of the Paris *Organon*, therefore, there is an ongoing awareness by scholars of the work of those who came before them, in Syriac and later, in Arabic, and constant and

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[232] Also possibly, 'I have copied.' (*nusikhat* vs. *nasakhtu*). Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 196, understands this in the passive sense.

[233] *allatī ṣaḥḥaḥahā min nusakh naẓara fīhā 'alā Abī Bishr*. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 196, translates this: 'corrigée d'après des copies revises par Abû Bišr...'

[234] See Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 2, pp. 531-532 and cf. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, p. 196 for the Arabic text and an FT.

[235] See Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū*, vol. 2, p. 532 and cf. Georr, *Les Catégories d'Aristote*, pp. 196-197 for the Arabic text and an FT. NB: On p. 196 Georr notes that this note is in a different hand than the preceding ones.

ongoing attempts to refine and improve translations. These Syriac-speaking scholars were engaged in precisely the same sorts of activities of translating, collating and revising that Syriac-speaking scholars had been undertaking for centuries. The continuity here is more than just one in content, it is one of approach and philological methodology.

Late Antiquity Lives on II: Evidence of Other Secular Genres in Syriac

I will return to the question of continuities in methodology in my next chapter. At present, however, I would like to continue to look at the question of continuities in genre. I have focused here on continued philosophical activity in Syriac, but other secular genres persisted in Syriac even as they disappeared in Greek. Severos Sebokht (d. ca. 667) has left behind several different astronomical works: a treatise on the astrolabe,[236] one on lunar eclipses, another on the phases of the moon, and another on constellations.[237] The seventh and ninth of the eleven extant letters of George of the Arabs, written in AD 714 and AD 716 respectively, deal extensively with astronomical and chronological matters.[238] Although Theophilos of Edessa (d. 785) was an astrologer in the service of the Caliph al-Mahdī, he has left us no astronomical or astrological works in Syriac;[239] the East Syrian Patriarch Timothy I (d. 823), however, another associate of of al-Mahdī, composed a now-lost 'Book of the Stars.'[240]

[236] For which, see F. Nau, 'Le traité sur l'astrolabe plan de Sévère Sabokt,' *Journal asiatique* n.s. 13 (1899), pp. 56-101, 238-303.

[237] Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 246.

[238] These were published by V. Ryssel in 'Die astronomischen Briefe Georgs des Araberbischofs,' *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Verwandte Gebiete* 8 (1893): 1-55 and are sections 10.1.1-10.9.14 and 12.1.1-12.4.7 in my edition of the letters.

[239] See Baumstark, *Geschichte,* pp. 341-342.

[240] See J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana* vol. 3.1 (Rome, 1725), p. 158: ܠܛܝܡܬܐܘܣ ܥܒܕ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܟܘܟܒܐ 'Timothy composed "The Book of the Star."' Also cf. R.J. Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I* (*Studi e Testi* 187) (The Vatican, 1956), p. 6.

Between Paul of Aigina, who lived through the Arab conquest of Alexandria, and the monk Meletios, who lived at some point during the Iconoclast era, Krumbacher and Hunger provide little in the way of evidence for the Greek study of medicine.[241] But in the Syriac-speaking world, medicine was still being studied and written about. When the ʿAbbasid Caliph al-Manṣūr summoned the Nestorian physician Jūrjis b. Gabriel from Jundīsābūr 148 AH (AD 765) to treat a stomach ailment, we are told by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa that the Caliph's advisors referred to Jūrjis as the 'head of the doctors of Jundīsābūr' and that Jūrjis took two students, Ibrāhīm and Īsā, with him to Baghdad; a third student, Sarjis, is also mentioned.[242] Jūrjis would translate a number of books from Greek into Arabic for al-Manṣūr and he would also compose a medical handbook in Syriac.[243] We need not fall into the error of thinking that a full-fledged hospital existed in Jundīsābūr at this time to use this story as evidence that the study of medicine was going on among East Syrian Christians during the so-called Dark Ages; otherwise, we would have to assume that the learned Jūrjis and his students spontaneously generated, medical knowledge and all, from nothing.[244] That we lack detailed and reliable evidence

[241] See K. Krumbacher, A. Ehrhard, and H. Gelzer, *Geschichte der Byzantinischen Litteratur von Justinian bis zum Ende des Oströmischen Reiches (527-1453)*, 2nd ed., (Munich, 1897), p. 614: 'In den nun folgendend dunkeln Jahrhunderten herrschte in der Medizin wie in den übrigen Profanwissenschaften fast vollständige Unfruchtbarkeit.' Also see H. Hunger, *Die Hochsprachliche Profane Literatur der Byzantiner I* (München, 1978), pp. 302-305.

[242] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbā'*, pp. 183-184. Note how Jūrjis greets the Caliph in Arabic and Persian, p. 184; he must have been a polyglot.

[243] For Jūrjis as Greco-Arabic translator Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn al-anbā'*, p. 279 and for the information here in general, Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, p. 108.

[244] See M.W. Dols, 'The Origins of the Islamic Hospital: Myth and Reality,' *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 61:3 (1987), p. 377, for the point that Jundīsābūr probably had a seminary where medical texts were also studied. Dols, *ibid*., pp. 371-377, provides an overview of hospitals and medical study in Syriac sources. On the 'myth' of a large medical school at Jundīsābūr, see P. E. Pormann and E. Savage-Smith, *Medieval Islamic Medicine* (Washington, DC, 2007), pp. 20-21. Writing around 660 AD, Anastasios of the Sinai offers evidence of their being infirmaries in Greek-speaking monastic contexts, too. For references to a νοσοκομεῖον see F. Nau, ed. 'Le texte grec des récits du moine Anastase sur les saints pères du Sinaï,' *Oriens Christianus* 2 (1902), p. 79 (a paralytic in the infirmary at St Catherine's) and also p. 83 (the pope gives money for the founding of an infirmary in a monastery near Rome).

of the specific tradition of medical study from which Jūrjis emerged does not mean that such a tradition never existed: his existence and the presence of students with him at Jundīsābūr means it must have. Where there is smoke, there must have been fire. Jūrjis was the patriarch of the renowned Bukhtīshū‘ family physicians who would remain prominent and serve caliphs for eight generations and some three centuries.[245]

That the study of medicine was going on in the Syriac-speaking world in the seventh and eighth centuries should come as no surprise: by the sixth century, Greek medicine had acquired a Syriac calling card. When he died in 536, Sergios of Resh‘ayna (d. 536) left behind translations of all or part of a large number of Galen's medical works into Syriac, 26 of which were known to Ḥunayn in the ninth century.[246] Another Syriac-speaking physician named Solomon was also writing in the sixth century, though his work is now known only through citations, including by al-Rāzī.[247] It was at some point between the sixth and eighth centuries that the anonymous Syriac *Book of Medicines* was written, a work which cites both Sergios and Solomon and which itself would be used extensively in the Arab period by Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh and ‘Alī b. Rabban al-Ṭabarī.[248]

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[245] For the Bukhtīshū‘ family, see Ullmann, *Die Medizin im Islam*, pp. 108-111. For Christian doctors prominent in the Umayyad period, see S. Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā fī khilafat banī Umayya*, vol. 3 (Beirut, 2005), pp. 574-585.

[246] Ḥunayn lists the following works as having been completely or partially translated by Sergios: 4: *On the Craft of Medicine*; 6: *To Glaukon*; 7: *On Bones*; 8: *On Muscles*; 9: *On Nerves*; 10: *On Veins*; 11: *On the Elements*; 12: *On Mixing*; 13: *On Natural Powers*; 14: *Book on Causes and Symptoms*; 15: *Diagnosing the Maladies of Inner Body Parts*; 16: *On Pulse*; 17: *On the Classes of Fevers*; 18: *On the Crisis of Illness*; 19: *On the Days of Crisis*; 20: *On Therapy*; 49: *On the Uses of the Body Parts*; 53: *On Simple Medicines*; 54: *On the Indications of the Illnesses of the Eye*; 66: *The Summary of his large book on the pulse*; 71: *Book on the opening of Veins*; 74: *On the Powers of Victuals*; 76: *Book on* χύμος; 79: *On the Structure of Medicines*; 80: *Medicines which are Easy to Find*; 101: *Commentary on the book on the Nature of the Embryo*. M. Dols, 'Syriac into Arabic: The Transmission of Greek Medicine,' *Aram* 1 (1989), p. 45, states that Sergios translated 32 works of Galen into Syriac, but neither lists the works nor offers a citation to support this.

[247] F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 3 (Leiden, 1970), pp. 176-177.

[248] See Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 3, pp. 177-178.

Sergios' translations of Galen's works made available to the Syriac-speaking world all but two of the eighteen works which comprised the curriculum of medical study in Alexandria.[249] Furthermore, from a passage from the *Risāla* quoted above, we learn that the physician Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh asked Ḥunayn to collate and correct Sergios' translation of the work *On Simple Medicines*;[250] similarly, Bukhtīshū' b. Jibrīl would ask Ḥunayn to go over and fix Sergios' translation of *Diagnosing the Maladies of the Inner Body Parts*.[251] In other words, Sergios' medical books were in fact in use in the ninth century and were not merely antiquarian curiosities discovered by a manuscript hunter like Ḥunayn.

The patrons of Sergios' translations are mostly unknown, but Ḥunayn does tell us that Sergios translated *Diagnosing the Maladies of the Inner Body Parts* (no. 15) twice: once for Theodore, the Bishop of Karkh and once for a man called al-Yasha (Elisha).[252] We know from Sergios himself that Theodore actually helped him translate some of Galen's works out of Syriac into Greek.[253] There was an active interest, therefore, in the study of medicine among the members of the church hierarchy—in addition to laymen—and church institutions provided a setting for the continued study of medicine in this period.[254] Indeed, the canons of the East Syrian Ḥenānā (d. ca. 610)

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[249] See H. Hugonnard-Roche, 'Note sur Sergius de Reš'ainā, traducteur du grec en syriaque et commentateur d'Aristote,' in G. Endress and R. Kruk, eds., *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 123-124.

[250] See above, n. 67. cf. Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 30 (Arabic text).

[251] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, pp. 12-13 (Arabic text).

[252] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 12 (Arabic text), p. 10 (GT), with reference to *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, p. 15. NB: Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, '*Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 283, describes Theodore's eager desire for translations.

[253] See S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kottayam, 1997), p. 202 and see note 253, below.

[254] V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London and New York, 2004), pp. 302-306 provides an overview of the relationship between Chrisitianity and medicine in the Late Antique period; p. 303 offers examples of individuals who were both clergymen and doctors.

suggest that the School of Nisibis had some sort of hospital or infirmary attached to it for the treatment of sick students;[255] the canons furthermore suggest that there were students at the School who studied medicine in addition to students who were studying theology. These two groups were to be kept separate from one another, though some students would apparently leave scholarship in order to study medicine.[256] And though Vööbus had doubts as to whether they actually went back to the School of Nisibis, ʻAbdishoʻ (d. AD 1318) has left us Arabic canons claiming to be from the school which suggest that at a certain point young students who were chosen for medicine there (*man yukhtār li-ʼl-ṭibb*) might be separated off and sent to the ʻhospitalʼ (*bīmāristān*);

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[255] Canons 1 of Ḥenānā, in A. Vööbus ed. and trans., *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis* (*Papers of the Estonian Theological Society in Exile* 12) (Stockholm, 1961), pp. 92-93: ܩܢܘܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ. ܕܐܟܣܢܕܘܟܪܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܐܟܣܢܕܘܟܝܢ ܕܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܠܐܚܐ ܕܡܬܟܪܗܝܢ ܚܦܝܛܐܝܬ ܢܦܪܘܣ ܘܡܕܡ ܠܐ ܢܚܣܪ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܬܘܪܣܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܠܐܣܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܡܬܒܥܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܬܘܒ ܢܓܢܘܒ ܐܘ ܢܥܘܠ ܒܡܕܡ ܕܐܬܬܓܒܠ ܠܗ ܠܡܦܪܢܣܘܬܗ. ܘܒܠܥܕ ܡܢ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܥܠܠܬܐ ܘܢܦܩܬܐ ܕܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܠܐ ܢܕܒܪ. ܘܐܢ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܕܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒܢ ܒܩܢܘܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܐ ܥܒܕ. ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܛܠܡ ܐܘ ܕܐܛܫܝ ܢܬܦܪܥ ܡܢܗ. ܘܩܢܣ ܢܬܠ ܡܛܒܥܐ ܕܘܐ ܚܡܫܝܢ ܐܣܬܝܪܝܢ ܠܐܟܣܢܕܘܟܝܢ. ܘܡܢ ܢܦܘܩ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܘܡܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ܀ (translation Vööbus): ʻThe first canon. The *ʼaksenādōkrā* who is in the xenodocheion of the school shall carefully provide for the brothers that have become sick, and nothing shall be lacking in the (things) required for their nourishment and their cure; and further he shall not steal or be unfaithful in something that has been entrusted to him in order to manage it. Without the *malpānā* of the school he shall not arrange income and expenses of the school. If it is found that he does not do one of these that are written in these canons, everything that he has defrauded or concealed shall be taken from him. He shall give as punishment money, 50 *ʼestirēn* for the xenodocheion. Then he shall leave the school and the town in shame.ʼ Dols, ʻThe Origins of the Islamic Hospital: Myth and Reality,ʼ p. 375, gives good analysis of the implications of this canon.

[256] See Canons 19 and 20 of Ḥenānā, in Vööbus, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis*, pp. 100-101: ܕܬܫܥܣܪ. ܐܚܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܐܬܘ ܥܡ ܐܣܘܬܐ ܠܡܥܡܪ ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ. ܕܠܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܥܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܒܚܕ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܢܬܩܪܘܢ܀ ܕܥܣܪܝܢ. ܐܚܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܒܩܘ ܐܣܟܘܠܝܘܬܐ ܘܢܦܩܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ. ܐܢ ܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܫܦܝܪܬܐ ܠܝܬ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܠܡܫܡܥ ܒܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܒܪܡ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܐܣܘܬܐ ܒܢܝ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ܀ (translation Vööbus): ʻThe nineteenth. The brothers who have come because of doctrine, are not allowed to live together with the physicians in order that the books of the craft of the world should not be read with the books of the holiness in one light. The twentieth. The brothers who have left scholarship and have departed for the (discipline of) medicine—if there is no good testimony about them, they are not allowed to hear in the school, except, however, the physicians, inhabitants of the town.ʼ See also A. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 94-95.

these were nevertheless supposed to have some basic familiarity with the Bible and the liturgy.[257]

The lines between theology and medicine would not always be clear. Ḥunayn notes that a certain priest named Joseph had made a partial translation of Galen's *On Simple Medicines* (no. 53).[258] In his letters, Jacob of Edessa would compare the task of the spiritual doctor with that of the physical one,[259] and the spiritual works of Jacob's late-seventh century East Syrian contemporary Simeon of Ṭaybūtheh represented a medicalization of Christian mysticism.[260] Simeon also wrote a now-lost book on medicine;[261] perhaps some sort of compendium, it would be frequently cited by al-Rāzī later in the Middle Ages.[262]

There are other things as well. Severos Sebokht, for example, wrote on geography.[263] According to Bar Hebraeus, Theophilos of Edessa, the Maronite astrologer who served al-Mahdī, translated 'the two books of Homer which are about

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[257] See Vööbus, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis*, p. 109: (translation Vööbus) 'All the younger ones read the Psalms of David, the books of the New Testament and the lessons which are read on Sundays, feast- and commemoration-days' who ever among them is set apart for the priesthood, has to read besides the text also a short commentary by Mār Ephrēm and a long one by Mār Theodore' and who ever is set apart for the study of medicine will be sent to the hospital. In short—all children of Christians before their introduction to professional training, shall read David [sc. the Psalter], the New Testament and the sections of the lessons.' For Vööbus's doubts about the canons, see *ibid*., pp. 109-111.

[258] See Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 30.

[259] See e.g., Jacob's second letter to John of Litarb, BL Add. 12,172, fol. 81a and his third letter to John of Litarb, BL Add. 12,172, fol. 82a. Also, see n. 499, below.

[260] See the comments of A. Mingana in A. Mingana, ed. and trans. 'Medico-Mystical Work, by Simon of Ṭaybūtheh,' *Woodbrooke Studies*, *vol. 7: Early Christian Mystics* (Cambridge, 1934), p. 1: 'Special importance attaches to the author's mystical writings from the fact that he was a physician, who endeavored to explain scientifically the different faculties of the soul in relation to the body and to the performance of the various exercises of asceticism.'

[261] See J. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3, p. 181: ܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܛܝܒܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܟܬܒܐ ܚܕ ܕܥܠ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܘܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܣܝܘܬܐ... 'Simeon of Ṭaybūthā has a book about the (monastic) way of life and another concerning medicine...' Fragments of this work survive in quotations in the *Lexicon* of Bar Bahlūl. See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 210, n. 1.

[262] See F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums*, vol. 3 (Leiden, 1970), p. 179.

[263] See the fragments *On the inhabited and uninhabited Earth*, and *On the measure of the Heaven and Earth and the Mountain which is between them* published in E. Sachau, *Inedita Syriaca: Eine Sammlung syrischer Übersetzungen von Schriften griechischer Profanliteratur* (Vienna, 1870), pp. ܩܠܒ – ܩܠܕ.

Ilion from Greek into Syriac.'[264] The eighth letter of George of the Arabs (written in 715) provides a Syriac witness to the *Life of Aesop* at a time when the Greek textual tradition of the *Life of Aesop* is barren;[265] moreover, it provides a missing link to help explain an eighth- or ninth-century Uighur version of the *Life*.[266] Jacob of Edessa's *Hexaemeron*, which was finished by George of the Arabs after Jacob's death, is a treasure-chest of information on a wide variety of topics: his text deals with geography, astronomy, zoology/natural history and anthropology, among other things, often in great detail.[267]

A tradition of historical writing continued in Syriac throughout the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries and a number of different Syriac chronicles have been preserved from this period or survive the works of later historians. The seventh-

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[264] See P. Bedjan, ed., *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Syriacum*, (Paris, 1890), pp. 126-127: ܒܗܢܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܡܬܝܕܥ ܬܐܘܦܝܠܐ ܒܪ ܬܐܘܡܐ ܐܘܪܗܝܐ: ܓܒܪܐ ܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܐ ܡܗܝܪܐ ܕܐܚܝܕ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܡܪܘܢܝܐ. ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ ܫܦܝܪܐ ܒܣܘܪܝܝܐ: ܘܐܦܢ ܒܝܫ ܒܗ ܘܡܓܢܒ ܠܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܐ. ܗܘܐ ܐܦܩ ܬܪܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܘܡܐܪܘܣ ܕܥܠ ܐܝܠܝܘܢ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܫܡܫ ܓܝܪ ܠܡܗܕܝ ܡܠܟܐ: ܘܐܬܪܚܡ ܡܢܗ ܛܒ ܡܛܠ ܡܝܬܪܘܬܗ ܕܒܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܠܘܓܝܐ. 'At this time, Theophilos, the son of Thomas, the Edessene came to prominence, a skilled astronomer who adhered to the heresy of the Maronites. He has a wonderful chronicle in Syriac—even if he is nasty to and critical of the Orthodox in it. He rendered the two books of Homer which are about Ilion from Greek into Syriac. Indeed, he served the Caliph al-Mahdī and he was greatly loved by him on account of his excellence in this craft of astrology.' On Homer in Syriac, also see H. Raguse, 'Syrische Homerzitate in der Rhetorik des Anton von Tagrit,' in Göttinger Arbeitskreis für syrischen Kirchengeschichte, ed., *Paul de Lagarde und die syrischen Kirchengeschichte mit einem Geleitwort von Prof. D. Hermann Dörries* (Göttingen, 1968), pp. 162-175.

[265] BL Add. 12,154, fols. 276a-276b (sections 11.6.1-11.6.2 in my edition); George is actually explicating a reference to the *Life of Aesop* that occurs in a letter of Jacob of Edessa (BL Add. 12,172, fols. 78a-b). See B.E. Perry, *Aesopica. A series of Texts relating to Aesop or ascribed to him or closely connected with the literary tradition that bears his name*, vol. 1 (Urbana, 1952), pp. 23, n. 51 (esp. p. 24), for the seventh-to-eleventh century gap in the textual tradition in the Life of Aesop. More recently, see P. Avlamis, 'Aesopic Lives: Greek Imperial Literature and Urban Popular Culture,' (PhD, diss., Princeton University, 2010), pp. 54-71, for a correction and nuancing of Perry, esp. pp. 59-62 on the importance of the Syriac witnesses to the history of the transmission of the text. I am grateful to Pavlos for guidance in this subject and for bringing to my attention the significance of the witness of George's eighth letter to the study of the *Life of Aesop*.

[266] See L. Rásonyi Nagy, 'Das uigurische Aesop-Josïpas Fragment,' *Byzantinisch-Neugriechische Jahrbucher* 7 (1930), pp. 429-443, which posits a seventh-eighth century intermediary to explain the Uighur text. I am grateful to Pavlos Avlamis for this reference.

[267] For an overview of the scientific content of Jacob's *Hexaemeron*, see L'Abbé Martin, 'L'Hexaméron de Jacques d'Édesse,' *Journal asiatique* (8ème sér.) 11 (1888) 401-90. See also, M. Wilks, 'Jacob of Edessa's Use of Greek Philosophy in His Hexaemeron,' in B. ter Haar Romeny, ed., *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (Leiden/Boston, 2008), pp. 223-238 as well as M. Greatrex, 'Memra One, Two and Four of the Hexaemeron of Jacob of Edessa: Introduction, Translation and Text,' (Phd, diss., University of Wales, College of Cardiff, 2000).

century *Melkite Chronicle* covered history from creation till shortly after the death of Herakleios in 641.[268] The *Maronite Chronicle* began with Alexander the Great and ended in the mid 660s.[269] The East Syrian *Khuzistan Chronicle* deals with the final fifty years the Sassanian Empire.[270] John of Phenek's *Ktābā d-resh Mellē* begins with creation and ends in the late seventh century.[271] Jacob of Edessa composed a chronicle which was meant to continue the work of Eusebios and which apparently ended in the year AD 692; unfortunately, it survives only partially and in citations in the works of later authors.[272] Two short world chronicles, the *Chronicle to the year 724* and the *Chronicle to the year 775* were also written in this time.[273] The *Chronicle to the year 846* begins at creation and continues into the ninth century.[274] We have several other short chronicles as well: what survives of the *Chronicle to the year 813* covers the years AD 775-813; the *Chronicle to the year 819* begins with Christ, but nearly a majority of it focuses on the seventh and eighth centuries.[275] The important *Ecclesiastical History* of Miaphysite Patriarch Dionysios of Tell Mahre (d. 845) survives in only very fragmentary form, but has been preserved through its extensive use by later historians like Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus.[276] Another important work, the *Zuqnin Chronicle* begins with creation and continues to AD 775.[277] We do not know for sure the exact coverage of the now-lost *Chronicle* of the Maronite Theophilos of Edessa, but it seems to have been at least ca.

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[268] See S.P. Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing: A Survey of the Main Sources,' *Journal of the Iraqi Academy (Syriac Corporation)*, 5 (1979/1980), p. 320.
[269] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 320.
[270] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 302.
[271] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 301.
[272] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 319.
[273] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 318.
[274] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 313.
[275] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' p. 314.
[276] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' pp. 313-312.
[277] Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' pp. 317-314.

590-750. Theophilos' work is now no longer extant, but three later important historians in Greek, Syriac and Arabic—Theophanes, Dionysios of Tellmahre, and Agapios of Manbij—drew extensively upon it for their work. Robert Hoyland has speculated that Theophilos' work may have in fact been a classicizing history.[278] In addition to all these works, we have several other short historical notices preserved from the eighth century.[279]

The 'Dark Ages': the Cultural Climax of Late Antiquity?

If there was a memo about there being a Dark Ages, it did not go out in Syriac. Significant aspects of Late Antique literary culture—both secular and religious—continued to live and flourish among the Syriac-speaking Christians—Miaphysite, Chalcedonian and Nestorian—of the Middle East through the darkest parts of the so-called 'Dark Ages.' Byzantinists looking for green shoots of learning in the sixth to ninth centuries need only look a little further east in order to find a veritable garden in bloom. For Syriac-speaking Christians, Late Antique culture reached its peak in 'Abbasid Baghdad, in the Greco-Arabic translation movement for which they supplied much of the intellectual muscle. This movement represented the results that could be achieved when the provincial scholarly culture that had developed in Syriac monasteries between the sixth and eighth centuries was combined with the finances and patronage of a metropole whose elites were not separated from them ecclesiastically and therefore often at enmity with them.

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[278] For this point, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 406-407. On Theophilos' *Chronicle* in general, see *ibid*., 401-409. Hoyland gives an attempted reconstruction of the *Chronicle* of Theophilos, which he refers to as the 'Syriac Common Source,' in *ibid*., pp. 631-671.

[279] See Brock, 'Syriac Historical Writing,' pp. 319-318, for his description of 'historical notices' dealing with 712-716 and short 'historical excerpts' dealing with 763-764.

The fact that Muslim rulers and metropolitan elites were now paying to have texts translated rather than local Christian bishops, Christian provincial elites or Christian congregations[280] does not mean that the scholarly practices and intellectual tradition which one sees in a document like the *Risāla* were any less Late Antique or that Ḥunayn himself was doing anything different from what Jacob of Edessa or Athanasios of Balad or Sergios of Resh'ayna had been doing. In fact, in his day Ḥunayn was consciously compared by others to Sergios and was seen as a sort of Sergios *redivivus*: 'By God,' one contemporary is reported to have said of the young Ḥunayn, 'if his life goes on, he will certainly outshine Sergios!'[281] To be sure, the resources and patronage of imperial elites made possible breadth and quality of work and translation that was not possible for Syriac-speaking Christians, many often persecuted by the Imperial Church, to achieve while under Byzantine rule.[282] The difference between these figures and Ḥunayn, however, was one of degree, not kind, and the divisions and labels that are placed upon them—Late Antique versus Medieval, Byzantine versus

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[280] For Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Athanasios Gamālā as the patron who commissioned the Syro-Hexaplaric OT translation, see A. Vööbus, *The Hexapla and the Syro-Hexapla. Very Important Discoveries for Septuagint Research* (Stockholm, 1971), pp. 42-43. Bishops also might commision the translation of secular medical works as well. Ḥunayn notes that Sergios translated *On Diagnosing Maladies of Inner Body Parts* (*De Locis affectis*) for Theodore, Bishop of Karkh. See Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 2 (Arabic), p. 12. For different types of Christian patrons of manuscripts, see, e.g., the colophon of BL Add., 14,479 (534 AD), which was paid for by a person from the village of Be-'Aital near Ḥimṣ; BL Add. 14,478 (622 AD), written for John bar Sergios from the village of Ḥalūgā of Sarūg who bought the ms. for the price of 14 carats; BL 14,430 (724 AD) which was paid for by Constantine, Bishop of Mardin and also partially funded by ܨܪܝ (Wright suggests vocalizing this as Ṣarai) the deacon of Tel-beshmai; BL Add. 14,485 and Add. 14,486 (both from 824 AD) were both paid for by the congregation of the church of Aḥudemmeh at Ḥarrān. For these manuscripts, see W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1,(London, 1870), pp. 86, 90, 15, 146, 149.

[281] Stated by Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū'. See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, '*Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 259.

[282] G. Saliba, *Islamic Science and the Making of the European Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2007), pp. 8-9, is quite dismissive of the quality of work done by Syriac-speaking scholars like Sergios, Severos Sebokht and George of the Arabs, referring to the method of Sergios as 'crude,' for example. He does acknowledge that the sophistication of Severos and George was on par with contemporary 'Byzantine' (sic) sources. Saliba's attitude is typical of the metropolitan perspective which ignores, downplays, and simply looks down upon the importance of Syriac provincial scholarly activity: p. 9, 'Why should the poorer Byzantine subjects, as the Syriac-speaking subjects were, know more than the more sophisticated and much richer Byzantine overlords?'

Islamic—say more about the academic formation and curricula of study of scholars in our own period than they do about anything actually happening between the sixth and ninth centuries; such labels also have the unhappy consequence of obscuring the deep connections and continuities which existed.

The fundamental contention of this chapter has been rather simple: it is strictly correct to say that without Sergios of Resh'ayna, Athanasios of Balad, Jacob of Edessa and others like them, Ḥunayn and the Greco-Arabic translation movement would have been inconceivable. When viewed from other, alternate centers—from the Syriac-speaking world of the Middle East—and not the the traditional urban centers which have occupied the attention of most scholars—Rome, Alexandria, Constantinople or Antioch—the alleged Dark Ages look quite different: the notion of a 'Dark Ages' in much of Byzantine culture becomes a chimera.

This is the case for several reasons: first, for the simple reason that many of the genres which ceased in Greek continued unabated and indeed flourished in Syriac. At a more profound level, however, the Syriac evidence gives us cause to re-evaluate what Late Antique participants in high culture in Late Antiquity actually held to be central and worth holding on to. The Syriac evidence points us to a suggestive conclusion: it was the sort of things we have seen in this chapter—philosophy, medicine, history—which were actually the most important to the mass of people living at that time. It was precisely these things, after all, that they never stopped producing. Looking at the evidence of which secular genres continued in Syriac, as we have done in this chapter, gives us a perspective which is free from the heavy shadow cast by the weight of post-Renaissance classical scholarship and humanism, which have valorized the sorts of

literary genres which (Theophilos of Edessa's translation of Homer in Syriac excepted) were not taken up by the Syrians. The beauty of such literature and the attention it traditionally has received in Western scholarship has, one might suggest, distorted our image of its importance and place in Late Antique high culture in general.

It is by viewing Late Antique high culture from what I have termed the periphery—the perspective of Syriac—that we actually subvert and, indeed, invert our notions of cultural center and cultural periphery. What the Syriac evidence suggests is that the hyperurban literary culture that scholars have traditionally focused their energies on was actually quite peripheral when it came to the broader streams of Byzantine secular culture. Put slightly differently, a very modern focus on what was actually rather peripheral at the time—the purview of only one portion of a small urban elite—has eclipsed what was actually at the center historically. The Syrians did not take take over certain genres because it was those genres which in reality were not all that important.

When viewed from outside the limited world of classical *paideia*, therefore, it becomes evident that the heart of Late Antique secular culture never stopped in the early medieval period. On the contrary, it continued, unbroken, and reached its climax in ninth-century 'Abbasid Baghdad.

Chapter 2: The Technique and Approach of Late Antique Scholarship

In the last chapter, I attempted to explore continuities in learning and certain types of literary genres and production that existed between the the Late Antique and 'Islamic' periods. Certain genres which had withered away in Greek continued to flourish in Syriac during a period allegedly characterized by decline and darkness. An indispensible context for viewing Ḥunayn, the Greco-Arabic translation movement and the Christian Aristotelians of Baghad, I argued, is that of the scholarly culture which developed among Syriac-speaking scholars of the Near East in the sixth and seventh centuries. In this chapter, I will attempt to make a similar argument for continuity. Rather than highlighting the continuities in genre, however, I shall rather focus on continuities in scholarly practice between the Late Antique and 'Islamic' periods.

The *Risāla*, though written in Arabic (at least in the recension we possess—recall that it was originally composed in Syriac and written for a Syriac-speaking Christian), presents us with a world of scholarly practices that are quite familiar to anyone with a knowledge of the history of Late Antique Syriac scholarship and philhellenism; the same holds true for the philological technique evidenced in the glosses of the Paris *Organon*. The Ḥunayn we see through the *Risāla* was doing what Syriac-speaking scholars had been doing since the age of Justinian (and before)—this is the sense in which the *Risāla* is a thoroughly Late Antique document. There is no need to speculate that Ḥunayn learned to collate and examine different manuscripts from the example of Galen,[283] nor is there anything 'Islamic' about the technique and approach to

[283] cf. L. D. Reynolds and N. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature* 3rd ed., (Oxford, 1991), p. 57: 'It is possible that the scrupulous consideration and comparison of divergent texts was a technique that he learnt at least in part from Galen, who employs much the same methods in handling the difficult text of the Hippocratic Corpus.' Scholars looking for

scholarship he adopts—Ḥunayn's precedents lie much closer to home: he was working from a living, vibrant and unbroken tradition of Syriac scholarship. Indeed, Rosenthal[284] and Walzer[285] both recognized that Ḥunayn's translational activities in Arabic had a context in the Syriac scholarly tradition from which he emerged, something which becomes apparent through examining the Syriac tradition before him.

Put differently, the concern for collation and for philological accuracy and precision evident in both the *Risāla* of Ḥunayn and in the Paris *Organon* is remarkable for the amount of testimony to such practices contained in one place, but the practices themselves are not unique. Ḥunayn represents a particularly strong intensification of a pre-existing and continuous scholarly tradition, not a new approach to scholarship. He is a branch—to be sure a large and strong one—on a tree whose roots stretch back for centuries before him into the Roman period. He is not a new tree. The original one was never cut down.

One of the most notable scholarly practices Ḥunayn engages in in the *Risāla* is the collation of manuscripts. In his tenth-century Syriac dictionary, Bar Bahlūl does not offer a definition of the Syriac word for 'collation,' *pūḥāmā*, but he does offer a definition for a related word, *peḥmā*, 'comparison,' which, perhaps unsurprisingly, he defines by quoting Ḥunayn.[286] Ḥunayn's concern for collation has attracted the

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Ḥunayn's geneology in the Greek- speaking world would do better to connect his philological practices to those of Origen, who brought pagan textual-critical practices to bear on the text of the Bible.

[284] cf. *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship*, pp. 26, 28-29.

[285] cf. *Greek into Arabic* pp. 80-81. Note the contrasts Walzer draws between the philological method of Ḥunayn and those of Ibn Suwār in the Paris *Organon*.

[286] See R. Duval, ed., *Lexicon Syriacum autore Hassano Bar Bahlule*, vol. 2, (Paris, 1901), col. 1533.

attention of various modern scholars.[287] But collating manuscripts was something Syriac-speaking scribes and scholars like Ḥunayn had been doing for centuries.[288] 'Let everyone who borrows this book,' reads the colophon of a Peshitta New Testament manuscript written in the same year that Muḥammad made the *hijra* to Madina—AD 622

> to read or to copy from or to collate from—or, moreover, if it happens that it is lost and he finds it—and then keeps it for himself or cuts something out of it or effaces something in it and does not return it to its owner, have the leprosy of Gehazi cling to him and his seed forever.[289]

Very similarly-worded colophons referring to manuscripts being borrowed for the purpose of collation or copying are common in Syriac manuscripts and occur both before the Islamic conquests and after[290] and the existence of such stock colophons,

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[287] See, e.g., Meyerhof, 'New Light on Ḥunain ibn Isḥâq and his period,' p. 707; G. Strohmaier, 'Hunayn b. Ishak as a Philologist,' *Ephrem-Hunayn Festival* (Baghdad, 1974), pp. 542-540; W.F. Macomber, 'The Literary Activity of Hunain b. Ishaq in Syriac,' *Ephrem-Hunayn Festival* (Baghdad, 1974), p. 568. Gutas, in his drive to de-emphasize the importance of the Syriac background to the Greco-Arabic translation movement, seeks to credit the Muslim patrons of the translations with the development of the high-level philological technique of the translators and not the monastic context where the translators were trained. See *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, pp. 140-141.

[288] This is something Rosenthal recognized. See F. Rosenthal, *The Technique and Approach of Muslim Scholarship* (Rome, 1947), p. 26.

[289] See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 91 ܟܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܐܠ ܠܗ ܠܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ: ܕܢܩܪܐ ܒܗ ܐܘ ܕܢܟܬܘܒ ܡܢܗ ܐܘ ܕܢܦܚܡ ܡܢܗ: ܐܘ ܬܘܒ ܐܢܗܘ ܕܐܒܕ ܘܡܫܟܚ ܠܗ: ܘܟܠܐܗ ܚܠܘܗܝ ܐܘ ܦܣܩ ܡܢܗ ܡܕܡ: ܘܠܚܐ ܒܗ ܡܕܡ ܘܠܐ ܡܗܦܟ ܠܗ ܠܡܪܗ. ܓܪܒܗ ܕܓܝܚܙܝ ܢܕܒܩ ܒܗ ܘܒܙܪܥܗ ܠܥܠܡ.. For Gehazi, see 2 Kings 5:27.

[290] See, e.g., BL Add. 18, 812 (a Peshitta NT ms. dated to 624 AD), BL. Add. 12,135 (a Peshitta OT ms. written in 726 AD), BL Add. 17,103 (a Syro-Hexaplaric OT ms. from the eighth century), BL Add. 14,437 (another Syro-Hexaplaric ms. OT from the eighth century), BL Add. 14,470 (a Peshitta NT ms. from the fifth or sixth century but which contains a tenth-century colophon of this type). See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, pp. 82, 25, 33, 34, 40. BL Add. 12,138 (an example of the so-called 'Syriac Masora' dated to 899 AD) contains what Wright refers to as 'one of the ordinary anathemas, here somewhat fuller than usual.' It reads: 'Let everyone who takes up this book to read in it or to copy from it or to collate with it or to correct [another text] from it—or for whatever reason might be the case—and who does not return it to this owner of it who [is mentioned] above—be cursed by the glorious Trinity and let him inherit the leprosy of Gehazi and the hanging of Judas the Betrayer and the shame of Simon. May the heaven above him be brass and the earth beneath him be iron and may all the curses which are written in Deuteronomy come upon him. Shudder, you wretch, at the fearsome word of God, and do not despise!' ܟܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܩܠ ܠܗ ܠܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܢܩܪܐ ܒܗ ܐܘ ܕܢܟܬܘܒ ܡܢܗ. ܐܘ ܕܢܦܚܡ ܡܢܗ. ܐܘ ܕܢܬܪܨ ܡܢܗ. ܐܘ ܒܟܠ ܥܠܬܐ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܗܝ.. ܘܠܐ ܡܗܦܟ ܠܗ ܠܡܪܗ ܗܢܐ ܕܠܥܠ. ܢܗܘܐ ܚܪܝܡ ܡܢ ܬܠܝܬܝܘܬܐ ܡܫܒܚܬܐ. ܘܢܐܪܬ ܓܪܒܗ ܕܓܝܚܙܝ. ܘܡܚܢܩܘܬܗ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ ܡܫܠܡܢܐ. ܘܒܗܬܬܗ ܕܫܡܥܘܢ.

employed for centuries, suggests that collating manuscripts was a routine practice in the Syriac context.

The West Syrian David bar Paulos (fl. late eighth century) has left us a letter in which he discusses the activities of the seventh-century Rabban Sabroy and his sons Ramīshū‘ and Gabriel. Ramīshū‘ and Gabriel, we are told, were from the monastery of Mar Mattai. Both would punctuate and correct books. Ramīshū‘ had a son named Sabrīshū‘ who left his father’s monastery and moved to a different one in the region of Marga. At this monastery, David bar Paulos tells us, a youth and a servant sought entry but were not initially received. When the head of the monastery, however, saw that they had a beautiful way of life and were more learned than their contemporaries, he gave them each a cell in the monastery:

> The two of them would take a book in which there was not any points of vocalization or correction. Each of them would enter into his cell and would punctuate on his own. And when they would go over the correction of the two of them, there was no addition made to one by the other. They did this with many books.

A number of well-known scholars, David bar Paulos writes, would follow Rabban Sabroy and his descendants in correcting and vocalizing manuscripts.[291]

ܘܬܘܒ ܐܦ ܥܡܠܐ ܕܠܟܠ ܡܢܗ ܢܣܒܐ. ܘܐܪܒܥܐ ܕܬܘܬܗܘܢ، ܦܪܙܠܐ. ܘܐܬܘܬܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ، ܟܠܗܝܢ ܠܩܦ̈ܠܐܬܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܢܟܗܘܢܐ. ܘܗܟ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܬܐ ܕܣܠܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܬܟܫܝܐ. Manuscript collation was practiced by early Muslims, too. See a report which mentions ‘Uthmān sending a codex containing his new compilation of the Quran to Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yaman, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd and Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī and ordering them to correct their Quranic codices on its basis in Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* (Cairo, 1936), p. 35.

[291] I.E. Rahmani, ed. and trans., *Studia Syriaca*, fasc. 1 (Charfeh, 1904), pp. ܡܗ - ܢܘ. ܘܒܥܘܬܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܗܘܘ ܕܒܝܬ ܦܫܝܛܐ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ. ܕܬܪܝܢ ܕܐܠܝܢ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ ܒܦ̈ܠܚܘܬܐ ܐܬܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܐܝܟ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܒܬܪܗ ܘܦܠܓܐ ܠܗ ܡܬܘܡܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ. ܘܡܦܩܝܢ ܕܗܘܝܢܐ ܐܬܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܟܕ ܚܙܐ ܪܝܫ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܫܦܝܪܝܢ: ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܒܢ̈ܝܫܐ ܕܙܒܢܗܘܢ. ܝܗܒ ܠܗܘܢ ܩܠܝ̈ܬܐ ܒܗ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܘܫܩܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܚܕ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܠܝܬ ܒܗ ܢܘܩܙܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܦܘܫܩܐ ܐܘ ܕܬܘܪܨܐ. ܘܥܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܠܩܠܝܬܗ. ܘܡܢܩܕ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗ. ܘܟܕ ܡܥܒܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܬܘܪܨܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܠܚܕ ܡܢ ܚܕ. ܘܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܠܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܥܒܕܘ. LT on pp. 44-45. For Rabban Sabroy, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 245-246 and R. Duval, *La littérature syriaque* (Paris, 1907), p. 56.

More than just common colophons employing standardized language indicate that collation was a common practice among Syriac scribes and scholars: we also have explicit references to acts of manuscript collation having taken place, often by named individuals. A note in a manuscript containing Peshitta Daniel and written in 532 AD states that 'this book was carefully collated in the Monastery of the Easterners,' a place which Wright speculates may have been in Edessa.[292] A manuscript written in the year 599 AD and containing Peshitta Joshua contains a note informing us that it was 'collated from a manuscript of the school of the Armenians.'[293] We have references to more than just one volume being collated as well: 'These books were collated in the Monastery of Mar Zakai,' reads a note in a manuscript of Peshitta Mark, written in 583 AD, 'Let he who reads pray for the sake of Our Lord for everyone who toiled in the collation of these books. I, Sābā, the priest, have written this. Pray for me!'[294] Ḥunayn was a Christian Arab and we even have references to Christian Arabs engaging in manuscript collation in what was most likely a pre-Islamic context. A note in a manuscript containing the Peshitta Gospels, dated by Wright to the sixth or seventh century, asks that

> Our Lord work His mercies and compassion on the great Day of His coming upon everyone who collated this book and who had concern about its collation from errors—it was collated with great care by Mar Qashīsh, the Arab priest of Nahrā

[292] BL Add. 14,445. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 26. ܐܬܦܚܡ ܕܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܡ̈ܕܢܚܝܐ ܒܥܡܠ ܛܒܐ. For this same monastery, being in Edessa and also associated with manuscript collation, see the discussion below of BL Add. 17,110.

[293] BL Add. 17,102. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 12. ܐܬܦܚܡ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܚܕ ܨܚܚܐ ܕܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܡܢܝܐ It is worth pointing out that the Syriac word for 'school' used here is *eskūlā*, which comes from the same Greek word, σχολή, as the Arabic *iskūl* which Ḥunayn used when he compared the pedagogical practice of his Christian contemporaries with those of the medical schools of Alexandria: this was no doubt the word used in the Syriac original of the *Risāla*.

[294] BL Add. 14,464, See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 70. ܐܬܦܚܡ ܟ̈ܬܒܐ ܗ̈ܠܝܢ ܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܙܟܝ܇ ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܩܪܐ ܢܨܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܡܪܢ ܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܠܐܝ܇ ܒܦܘܚܡܐ ܕܟ̈ܬܒܐ ܗ̈ܠܝܢ ܐܢܐ ܣܒܐ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܟܬܒܬ [ܟܬܒܬ] ܨܠܘ ܥܠܝ

d-Qastrā, along with his σύγκελλοι who were diligent with him, Mar Yūḥanān bar Daniel, the Arab (*ṭayāyā*) and Mar Yūḥanān, the deacon who is from AWNMRA (he is an Arab (*ʿarbāyā*) by race)—may God, for the sake of Whose name they worked assiduously for the collation of this book, grant them a good recompense.[295]

As we have seen, both Ḥunayn and the Paris *Organon* give indications that collation was at least sometimes done in teams of two people working together. We have similar indications of this practice of oral collation taking place in pre-Islamic Syriac contexts. A colophon in a manuscript containing the Peshitta Gospels states that

> This book was completed in the twenty-fifth year of Khusro bar Hūrmuz [615 A.D.], King of the Persians, in the holy city of Nisibis, during the lifetime of the diligent shepherd, Mar Bāshā, the Metropolitan, and Mar Matai, the head of the teachers, and Mar Ahā, the teacher and Mar Bar Sahdē, the instructor.[296] Mar Gabriel Qaṭrāyā obtained, as if it were his, and collated it with great care in the presence of the true teacher Mar Māran Zkā, who is among the Fathers, for his benefit and for the benefit of all the inhabitants of his region.[297]

The specific mention here of collation taking place, *qdām*, 'in the presence' or 'before' another person, suggests that the comparison was an oral collation, like that described by Ḥunayn. We also have a note written in the year 600 AD in a Peshitta Psalter which

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[295] BL Add. 14,458. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 47 for the dating, p. 48 for the text: ܢܚܒܪ: ܡܪܢ ܪ̈ܫܡܐ ܘܫܢܝܐ ܒܥܘܡܩܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܡܬܬܠܝܗ: ܟܠ ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܦܚܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܘܦܚܡܐ ܠܗ ܥܡܠ ܛܝܒܐ ܡܛܠ ܦܘܚܡܗ ܕܡܢ ܛܟ̈ܣܐ. ܦܘܚܡܗ ܕܝܢ ܒܥܡܠ ܛܝܒܐ ܗܟܢܐܝܬ. ܡܪܝ, ܡܫܝܚ ܛܝܒܐ ܡܥܡܕܐ ܕܒܗܪܐ ܕܩܣܛܪܐ. ܥܡ ܣ̈ܘܢ ܩܠܠܘܗܝ ܕܚܦܛܘ ܥܡܗ. ܡܪܝ, ܝܘܚܢܢ ܛܝܝܐ ܒܪ ܕܢܝܐܝܠ. ܘܡܪܝ, ܝܘܚܢܢ ܫܡܫܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܘܢܡܪܐ. ܥܪܒܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܒܓܢܣܗ. ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܛܠ ܫܡܗ ܚܦܛܘ ܡܛܠ ܦܘܚܡܗ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ. ܗܘ ܢܬܠ ܠܗܘܢ ܦܘܪܥܢܐ ܛܒܐ

[296] For discussion of the precise meanings of *maqryānā* and *mhagyānā*, which I have rendered rather blandly as 'teacher' and 'instructor,' respectively, here, see, A. Vööbus, *The Statutes of the School of Nisibis* (Stockholm, 1961), p. 83, n. 41 and n. 42. The former's job likely included instruction in grammar as well as instruction in liturgical reading and chanting; the latter perhaps was responsible for teaching elementary reading and for helping the student overcome the differences between the demotic and classical languages.

[297] BL Add. 14,471. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, pp. 53-54 for the text. ܐܫܬܠܡ ܕܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܒܫܢܬ ܥܣܪܝܢ ܘܚܡܫ ܕܟܘܣܪܘ ܒܪ ܗܘܪܡܝܙܕ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܣܝܐ ܒܢܝ ܒܡ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܢܨܝܒܝܢ ܒܝܘܡܝ ܪܥܝܐ ܚܦܝܛܐ ܡܪܝ, ܒܫܐ ܡܝܛܪܘܦܘܠܝܛܐ. ܘܡܪܝ ܡܬܝ, ܪܝܫ ܡܩܪ̈ܝܢܐ ܘܡܪܝ, ܐܚܐ ܡܩܪܝܢܐ ܘܡܪܝ, ܒܪ ܣܗܕ̈ܐ ܡܗܓܝܢܐ܀ ܩܢܝܗ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܕܝܠܗ ܘܦܚܡܗ ܒܥܡܠ ܛܒܐ ܪܒܐ ܫܠܝܐ ܩܕܡ ܢܐ ܠܒܪܢܐܠ ܡܛܪܢܐ ܩܕܡ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܡܪܝ, ܡܪܢ ܙܟܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܗ̈ܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝܘܬܪܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܘܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܐܬܪܗ

is even more explicit about manuscript collation being undertaken by two individuals, as we saw in Ḥunayn and the Paris *Organon*:

> In the year 911 [AG] this book was collated in the holy congregation of Ramshā. Samuel and Matai, from the Monastery of the Easterners in Edessa, made the collation when they had gone out of their monastery in exile (ἐξορία), in the days of Maurice the Emperor and Domitian, the bishop of Melitene. It was collated with great care from a manuscript possessed by the Monastery of the Easterners. Now then, do not erase a point from it! And do not edit it and rely upon your knowledge, O man! But know that you will give a response to God and will be reckoned as one who despoils the sanctuary![298]

The *Sixth Book of the Select Epistles* of Severos of Antioch contains a note which suggests that two people were involved in its production. It was translated in AD 669 by Athanasios of Nisibis (who may or may not have been the same person as Athanasios II of Balad[299]); another individual, a priest named Severos, may have written down the text at the dictation of Athanasios. This is how Wright understood the Syriac of the note.[300] Brooks understood it in a similar way, rendering it:

> Translated from Greek into Syriac by the religious presbyter Athanasius of Nisibis and written at his dictation by the devout presbyter Severus, at the instance of the saintly bishops, Matthew of the city of Berrhoea and Daniel of the city of Edessa, in the year nine hundred and eighty of the Greeks. But for our Lord's sake, let every reader pray for them![301]

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[298] BL Add. 17,110. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 118, p. 118 ܒܫܢܬ ܬܫܥܡܐܐ ܘܚܕܥܣܪܐ ܐܬܦܚܡ [ܐܬܦܚܡ] ܕܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܒܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܪܡܫܐ. ܦܚܡܘ [ܦܚܡܘܗ] ܕܝܢ ܫܡܘܐܝܠ ܘܡܬܝ. ܡܢ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، [ܟܕ] ܢܦܩܘ [ܢܦܩܝܢ] ܡܢ ܕܝܪܗܘܢ ܠܐܟܣܘܪܝܐ. ܒܝܘܡܝ ܡܘܪܝܩܝ ܡܠܟܐ ܘܕܘܡܛܝܢܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܡܝܠܝܛܝܢܐ: ܐܬܦܚܡ ܕܝܢ ܒܥܡܠ ܛܒܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ. ܡܢ ܚܕ ܨܚܚܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܝܐ. ܗܫܐ ܠܐ ܬܗܓܐ ܡܢܗ ܢܘܩܙܐ. ܘܠܐ ܬܬܩܢ ܒܗ ܘܬܬܟܠ ܥܠ ܝܕܥܬܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܗܘܝܬ ܝܕܥ ܕܝܗܒ ܐܢܬ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ. ܘܡܬܚܫܒ ܐܢܬ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܚ ܒܝܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ

[299] Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 564 identifies Athanasios of Nisibis with Athanasios of Balad, but E.W. Brooks (in *idem*., ed. and trans., *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. II, part I (London, 1903) p. X, n. 1) and Baumstark (*Geschichte*, p. 259) hold that they are distinct persons.

[300] cf. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 564, 'Another note on the same page states that these letters were translated from the Greek by the priest Athanasius of Nisibis, who dictgated tohem to the priest Severus, at the request of Matthew, bishop of Aleppo, and Daniel, bishop of Edessa, A. Gr. 980, A.D. 669.'

[301] E.W. Brooks, ed. and trans., *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. II, part II (London, 1904), p. 464. Syriac text in idem., ed. and trans., *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch, in the Syriac Version of Athanasius of*

MQBL MNH was understood by both scholars to suggest dictation; both seem to have read it as an Aph'el form—*maqbel meneh*—which, more literally might mean something like 'while Severos was facing him' or 'receiving from him.' One possible meaning of the Aph'el form of Q.B.L., however, is in fact 'to collate' or 'to compare.'[302] In other words, we might take this note to mean that Severos helped Athanasios collate the book which was translated and that more than just mere dictation was going on. Regardless of how the note is read, however, it is further evidence for team production of texts.

And there is more of the same. A manuscript containing Peshitta 1 Kings and part of 2 Kings, written in 724 AD—that is, the late Umayyad period, over eight decades before Ḥunayn's birth—contains another witness to such group efforts at collation, stating, 'Theodosios of Tella and the brother Abraham, from the Monastery of the Thorns, collated this book. Let everyone who reads [it], pray for them!'[303] Another manuscript, from the same year, 724 AD, and containing Peshitta Numbers, reflects perhaps most explicitly the same sort of collational activity that Ḥunayn spoke about undertaking with Salmawayh, though in this case, the collation was Syriac-Syriac and not Greek-Arabic. 'Our Lord Jesus the Messiah,' a note probably written in 817 AD, when Ḥunayn was a boy of perhaps eight, implores

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Nisibis (London, 1904), p. 521: ܡܦܫܩ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܠܕܝܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܒܝܕ ܥܢܘܝܐ ܟܕ ܡܩܒܠ ܡܢܗ ܢܟܦܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܣܐܘܪܐ. ܟܕ ܗܘܐ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܡܠܬ ܕܚܠܦ ܘܕܝܢܐܝܠ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܒܫܢܬ ܬܫܥܡܐܐ ܘܬܠܬܝܢ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܚܝܠ ܡܢܝ ܟܠ ܕܩܪܐ ܢܨܠܐ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ

[302] See Y. Manna, *Qāmūs kaldānī-'arabī* (Beirut, 1975), s.v. *qbal* (the fourth meaning given for *aqbel*, p. 653, is *qābala*, *'āraḍa al-kitāb*. *Qābala* is the standard verb for collation used by Ḥunayn and in the Paris *Organon*.)

[303] BL Add. 14,430. See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 16: ܦܚܡܘ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ. ܬܐܘܕܘܣܝܘܣ ܬܠܝܐ. ܘܐܚܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܡܢ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܘܒܐ. ܟܠ ܕܩܪܐ ܢܨܠܐ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ

> have mercy on the feeble, sinful and miserable (man), who has need of the mercy of God, Rūbīl the sinful deacon, who read this Testament with his master Mār Abraham Ḥaḥunāyā (?); and they inserted (words) in it, and restored (injured passages) in it, and made erasures from it; but this they did only where it was proper. Lord, give a blessing, that every one who reads in these books may pray for Rūbīl the sinner, who sewed, and read, and renovated, and for Abraham his master abundantly and especially...[304]

Indeed, the practice of collating manuscripts by Syriac-speaking scribes and scholars would continue well into the Middle Ages. 'With the help of God,' a subscription in a manuscript dated AD 1234 and containing the Four Gospels, begins

> the Gospel according to John, the Holy Apostle, is ended, along with the other three Evangelists, his companions—Matthew, Mark, Luke—according to the true and precise translation of Thomas of Harkel, which was collated from four accurate manuscripts and which was also confirmed and verified at the hands of the late Mar Dionysios, the Bishop of Amīd, who is Jacob bar Ṣalībī [d. 1171 AD] and now with the righteous...[305]

We can see some of the effects of this collation in notes in manuscripts. A short note prefaced to Psalm 151 in the Syro-Hexapla informs the reader that 'In the case of this Pslam, it has written, 'of David,' but it is outside the [established] number; it is not,

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[304] BL Add. 14,428. Translation by Wright. See *idem.*, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 9: ܡܪܝ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܚܘܣ ܠܡܚܝܠܐ ܘܚܛܝܐ ܘܕܘܝܐ ܘܣܢܝܩ ܠܪܚܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܪܘܒܝܠ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܚܛܝܐ ܕܐܩܪܝܗ̇ [ܕܐܩܪܝܗ̇] ܠܕܝܬܝܩܐ ܗܕܐ ܥܡ ܪܒܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܪܝ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܚܚܘܢܝܐ ܘܐܥܠܘ ܒܗ̇ ܘܐܬܩܢܘ ܒܗ̇ ܘ ܓܪܕܘ ܡܢܗ̇. ܒܪܡ ܕܝܢ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܪܟܡܪ، ܕܟܠ ܕܩܪܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܢܨܠܐ ܠܗ ܥܠ ܪܘܒܝܠ ܚܛܝܐ ܕܚܛ ܘܩܪܐ ܘܚܕܬ ܘܥܠ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܪܒܗ ܕܝܠܗ ܝܬܝܪ ܘܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ...

[305] BL Add. 17,124, see Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 42. ܫܠܡ ܒܥܘܕܪܢܗ ܕܡܪܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܝܘܚܢܢ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܥܡ ܫܪܟܐ ܕܬܠܬܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝ̈ܣܛܐ ܚܒܪ̈ܘܗܝ: ܡܬܝ ܡܪܩܘܣ ܠܘܩܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܘܚܬܝܬܬܐ ܕܬܐܘܡܐ ܚܪܩܠܝܐ. ܕܗܘ ܐܬܦܚܡ ܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܒܥܐ ܨܚ̈ܚܐ ܚܬܝ̈ܬܐ ܘܟܕ ܐܫܬܪܪ. ܘܐܦ ܥܠ ܐ̈ܝܕܝ ܢܝܚ ܢܦܫܐ ܡܪܝ ܕܝܘܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܡܝܕ. ܕܗܘ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܒܪ ܨܠܝܒܝ ܕܥܡ ܟܐ̈ܢܐ ܘܢܘܚܡܗ My thanks to George Kiraz for his advice on how to understand a participle in this passage. Further examples of collation colophons continuing into the Middle Ages could be multiplied with relative ease. See, e.g., BL Add. 14,547, dated by Wright to the ninth century (Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 432): ܦܚܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܬܐܘܡܐ ܡܢ ܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܝ̈ܚܝܕܝܐ ܕܩܠܠܬ ܟܠ ܕܩܪܐ ܢܨܠܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ. ܐܠܗܐ ܢܚܘܣ ܥܠܘܗܝ 'Thomas, from the holy convent of the monks of Qellat, collated this book. Let everyone who reads, pray for him: "May God have mercy on him."' (trans. Wright, spelling altered)

therefore, found in all manuscripts.'[306] At some point in the ninth century, a scribe, who had no doubt been involved in collation, inserted John 7:50-8:12—the *pericope adultera*—in the Harklean translation into fifth- or sixth-century manuscript of the Peshitta New Testament. 'This passage (σύνταξις) is not found in all manuscripts,' a note added before the text reads, 'but the Abbat Mar Paul found it in one of the Alexandrian manuscripts and translated it from Greek into Syriac, as it is found here.'[307] Translation might also be accomplished by a pair working together. Sergios of Resh'ayna's (d. 536) *Introduction* to Aristotle's *Categories* was written for Theodore, the Bishop of Karkh. At the beginning of this work, Sergios speaks of having worked on translating some of the works of Galen with the help of Theodore: 'When we were translating certain works of the doctor Galen from Greek into Syriac,' he writes, 'I used to translate, while you would write it down after me, correcting the Syriac wording, in accordance with the requirements of the idiom of this language.'[308]

Looking outside of Syriac evidence, it become apparent that the sorts of practices we have been discussing were phenomena characteristic of manuscript culture across the Late Antique world. A sixth- or seventh-century note in the famous Codex Sinaiticus, for example, indicates that it underwent an oral collation and collating books orally in pairs is in fact a practice for which we have both Greek and

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[306] See A.M. Ceriani, ed., *Codex Syro-Hexaplaris Ambrosianus Photolithographice editus* (*Monumenta sacra et Profana ex Codicibus Praesertim*, vol. 7) (Milan, 1874), fol. 38v. ܗܢܐ ܡܙܡܘܪܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܡܬܟܬܒ. ܘܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܗܘ. ܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܨ̈ܚܚܐ ܡܫܬܟܚ܀

[307] BL Add. 14,470, see Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, pp. 40-41. ܗܕܐ ܣܘܢܛܟܣܝܣ ܠܐ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܨ̈ܚܚܐ ܡܫܬܟܚܐ. ܐܫܟܚܗ̇ ܕܝܢ ܐܒܒܐ ܡܪܝ ܦܘܠܐ. ܒܚܕ ܡܢ ܨ̈ܚܚܐ ܐܠܟܣܢܕܪ̈ܝܐ ܘܦܫܩܗ̇ [ܡܢ] ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܡܫܬܟܚܐ ܗܪܟܐ.

[308] Translation S.P. Brock in *idem.*, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kottayam, 1997), p. 202. For this Theodore as Theodore the Bishop of Karkh Juddan, see Brock's comments, p. 201.

Latin evidence going back to at least the early fourth-century AD.[309] The philological techniques employed by Ḥunayn and the Paris *Organon* extend back deep into the heart of the Roman period.

As was earlier the case, another remarkable letter (no. 47) of the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I, the head of Ḥunayn's church whose life overlapped with Ḥunayn's for about a decade and a half, provides a vivid illustration of the persistence of Late Antique scribal practices evidenced in the texts surveyed thus far into the 'Abbasid period and into Ḥunayn's own lifetime in a Syriac context.

Letter 47 was written to Sergios, the bishop of Elam, in probably ca. 796-797 AD[310] and deals with the production of copies of the Syro-Hexapla, a seventh-century translation of the fifth column of Origen's *Hexapla*, which was Origen's own revised translation of the Septuagint.[311] The Syro-Hexapla was translated by the Miaphysite Paul of Tella and Timothy I has been credited with initiating its use in the East Syrian Church.[312] Timothy begins the letter by noting that he obtained a copy of the Syro-Hexapla, 'written on sheets [χάρται] using the Nisibene format,' by means of the

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[309] T.C. Skeat, 'The Use of Dictation in Ancient Book Production,' *Proceedings of the British Academy* 42 (1956), pp. 193-194 reproduces the colophon with an ET. Skeat shows on p. 194 that the collation note from Origen's *Hexapla* was written ca. 309. Skeat also cites a colophon to a work of Irenaeus (Hist. Eccles. V.20.2) which shows that individual collation was also a scribal practice. For more Greek and Latin evidence for collation in pairs, see P. Petitmengin and B. Flusin, 'Le livre antique et la dictée: nouvelles recherches,' in *Mémorial André-Jean Festugière: antiquité païenne et chrétienne* (Genève, 1984), pp. 249-251. See also the reports of early Muslims comparing different codices of the Quran together in the period before the 'Uthmānic recension of the text had gained hegemony in Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* (Cairo, 1936), pp. 156-157.

[310] See R.J. Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I* (*Studi e Testi* 187) (Rome, 1956), p. 71. NB, however, that Brock suggests the letter was 'written towards the end of Timothy's life' in 828. See *idem*., *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 245.

[311] On the fifth column, see N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las Versiones Griegas de la Biblia,* 2nd ed., (Madrid, 1998), pp. 217-224; and K.H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, 2000), pp. 51-53.

[312] cf. B. ter Haar Romeny, 'The Syriac Versions of the Old Testament,' in *Nos sources: arts et littérature syriaques* (Antélias, 2005), p. 82 and in general, *idem*., 'Biblical Studies in the Church of the East: The Case of Catholicos Timothy I,' in *Studia Patristica* vol. 34, edd. M.F. Wiles, E.J. Yarnold and P.M. Parvis (Leuven, 2001), pp. 503-510.

‘diligence of our brother Gabriel [b. Bukhtīshū‘] synkellos [σύγκελλος] of the resplendent caliph.’[313] This is the same Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū‘ who appears as a patron in the *Risāla* now showing up as being involved in the production of not just ‘secular’ medical works, but also of Christian texts. Seven different works of Galen were translated for him by either Ḥunayn or by Job of Edessa;[314] in fact, Ḥunayn’s very first translation of a text of Galen, (no. 17) *On the Classes of Fevers*, was executed for Gabriel.[315] Here in *Letter 47* we see Gabriel obtaining a copy of a Syriac biblical manuscript; in the *Risāla*, however, as we have already mentioned, we hear of Gabriel seeking out a copy of Galen’s *On Demonstration* ‘with great care’, though only finding ‘some sections of it,’ some different from the ones Ḥunayn had located. Job of Edessa, we are told, ‘translated for [Gabriel] what he had found of it.’[316]

When Gabriel had secured a copy of the Syro-Hexapla for Timothy, he had apparently asked that several copies be written out for him. Timothy provides a revealing image of the process by which Biblical manuscripts were produced:

> We hired six scribes and two people to dictate, who dictated to the scribes from the text of the exemplar. We wrote out the entire Old Testament, with Chronicles, Ezra, Susanna, Esther and Judith, producing three manuscripts, one for us and two for the resplendent Gabriel; of those two, one was for Gabriel

[313] Trans. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 246. For the Syriac text, see O. Braun, ‘Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I über biblische Studien des 9 Jahrhunderts,’ *Oriens Christianus* 1 (1901), p. 300: ܕܒܝܕ ܟܠ ܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ ܒܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܡܬܩܢܝܐ ܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܗ ܕܐܚܘܢ ܓܒܪܐܝܠ ܣܘܢܩܠܠܘܣ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܢܨܝܚܐ

[314] See Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq* (page numbers refer to the Arabic text): Translated by Ḥunayn: no. 13, *On Natural Powers*, pp. 10-11 (translated when Ḥunayn was about 17 years old); no. 17, *On the Classes of Fevers*, p. 15; no. 43, *On the Arteries* (translated when Ḥunayn was a young man), pp. 25-26; no. 108, *On the Substance of the Soul, what it is, according to the Opinions of Asklepiades*, pp. 45-46 (translated when Ḥunayn was a young man). Translated by Job: no. 16, *On Pulse* (a partial translation), pp. 14-15; no. 21, *On the Treatment of Anatomy*, pp. 15-16; no. 115, *On Demonstration*, pp. 47-48.

[315] See Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 15 (Arabic text) (GT p. 12): ‘Sergios made a translation of this book which was not praiseworthy. I myself translated it first for Gabriel b. Bukhtīshū‘, while I was a young man and this was the first book I translated of the books of Galen into Syriac. Then, after I became a grown man, I scrutinized it and found defects in it, so I fixed it with care. I corrected it when I wanted a copy for my son and I also translated it into Arabic for Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Mūsā.’

[316] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 47 (Arabic text) (GT p. 39), with reference to *idem*., *Neue Materialien*, pp. 22-23.

himself, and the other for Beth Lapat [sc. Jundīsābūr], for this is what Gabriel had instructed in writing. The manuscripts have now been written out with much diligence and care, at the expense of great trouble and much labour, over six months more or less.[317]

The Syro-Hexapla, as we will see in a little bit, was equipped with a sophisticated textual-critical apparatus which employed the Aristarchian signs employed in Origen's Hexapla.[318] The presence of copious textual variants and critical symbols meant that copying out the manuscripts represented a particularly difficult task. 'For no text is so difficult to copy out or read as this,' Timothy continued,

> seeing that there are so many things in the margin, I mean readings of Aquila, Theodotion, Symmachus and others, taking up almost as much space as the text of the Septuagint in the body of the manuscript. There are also a large number of different signs above them—how many, it is not possible for anyone to say.[319]

We have been interested in the question of the collation of manuscripts and Timothy provides us with perhaps the clearest description of the process which we possess in Syriac:

> The copying was done as far as possible using correction, seeing that it had been made from dictation; the copies were gone over a second time and read out. As a result of the excessive labor and work of correction, my eyes were harmed and I nearly lost my sight—you can get an idea of the weakness of our vision from these shapeless letters that we are writing now. Even the exemplar from which we were copying, however, contained errors, and most of the Greek names were

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[317] Translation Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 246. Syriac text in O. Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I über biblische Studien des 9 Jahrhunderts,' p. 300: ܘܐ ܟܬܒܢ ܫܬܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܡܬܟܬܒܢܐ ܕܡܬܟܬܒܝܢ ܗ̄ܘܘ ܠܟܬܘܒܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܬܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ ܕܝ̱ ܣܘܟܐ. ܘܡܬܟܬܒܝܢ ܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܟܠܗ̇: ܚܕ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܣܒܝܢ ܘܡܬܩܢ ܘܡܫܟܢ ܘܐܬܩܢܬ ܘܐܣܬܪܗܒܬ ܠܘܬ ܐܢܕܝܣܒܘܪ. ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒ ܠܝ. ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܡܣܡܟܢܐ ܓܒܪܐܝܠ. ܘܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܗܕܐ: ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܠܓܒܪܐܝܠ. ܐܚܪܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܒܝܬ ܠܦܛ. ܗܟܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܟܬܒ ܦܩܕ ܓܒܪܐܝܠ. ܘܐܬܟܬܒܘ ܡܢ ܟܕܘ ܒܟܘܠ ܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܘܒܝܬ ܢܨܝܚܘܬܐ: ܘܒܥܡܠܐ ܘܒܠܐܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܘܒܙܒܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ: ܒܫܬܐ ܝܪ̈ܚܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܝܬܝܪ ܒܨܝܪ.

[318] On the Ἀριστάρχεια σήματα see H.B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (repr. New York, 1968), pp. 69-73.

[319] Translation Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 246. Syriac text in O. Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I über biblische Studien des 9 Jahrhunderts,' pp. 300, 302: ܠܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܦܬܓܡ ܕܥܣܝܩ ܠܡܟܬܒ ܘܠܐ ܠܡܩܪܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ. ܟܕ ܗܘ ܕܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܗܢܝܢ ܕܒܐܣܦܪܐ: ܕܐܩܘܠܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܘܬܐܕܘܛܝܘܢ ܘܣܘܡܟܘܣ ܘܕܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ: ܟܡܐ ܕܩܠܝܠ ܐܝܟ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܒܥܝܢ ܕܒܓܘܫܡܐ. ܣܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܘܡܫܚܠܦܝܢ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܕܠܥܠ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܣܕܪܐ: ܟܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܢܐܡܪ ܐܢܫ

> written in reverse: the person who wrote them must have had a knowledge of Greek as weak as our own, apart only from the fact that he was not aware of the reversal of the characters he was writing, whereas we were at least aware of that! For he had not noticed the replacement and interchange of the characters, sometimes writing the letter chi in place of kappa, and zeta in place of chi, as well as putting all sorts of other things. We, however, recognized the situation. At the end of every biblical book the following was written: "This was written, collated and compared with the exemplar of Eusebius, Pamphilius and Origen." This then, is the way the Hexapla had been copied.[320]

The continuity in practice in book production which existed between the Late Antique and 'Islamic' periods in the Syriac tradition can be seen by simply comparing Timothy's statements with the colophons and evidence adduced above. Furthermore, like collation in pairs, the practice of producing manuscripts through dictation is one which we have evidence from centuries before the 'Abbasid period. A colophon to a manuscript containing the *De Incarnatione* of Athanasios, for example, written in 564 AD, asks for the favor of God 'upon John the scribe, priest (and) scribe of Edessa who wrote (this book), and upon Leontios of Jerusalem, a brother who dwells in the same monastery [sc. Bayt Mar Qurqa] who dictated to the scribe.'[321]

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[320] Translation Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, pp. 246-247. Syriac text in O. Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I über biblische Studien des 9 Jahrhunderts,' pp. 302, 304: ܘܐܬܟܬܒܘ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܗܢܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܒܚܘܠܦܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܡܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ ܐܬܟܬܒ. ܐܬܬܥܒܪܘ ܕܝܢ ܬܦܢܝܢ ܘܐܦ ܐܬܦܢܝܘ. ܘܡܢ ܬܬܪܬ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܗܘܘ ܘܬܬܪܝܢ ܐ: ܐܬܢܣܒܠ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܡܒܪ ܘܣܓܝܐܢ ܒܝ ܢ ܠܝܠ. ܘܡܫܬܟܚܠ ܐܬ̈ܐ ܒܠ ܡܚܝܠܬܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ: ܡܢ ܦܘܪܓܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܣܪܛܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܝܢ. ܒܪܡ ܕܝܢ ܘܐܦ ܗܘ ܝ ܚܢܢ ܕܐܢܗܘ ܟܬܒܝܢ. ܐܝܬ ܗ̄ܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܗܝ ܐ̈ ܘܡܚܘܠܦܢܐ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܕܒܗ: ܐܝܟ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܠܐ ܦܟܝܢ ܒܟܬܒܝܢ ܗ̄ܘܘ: ܕܡܫܟܚܐ ܗ̄ܘܝܬ ܢܘܗܪܬܗ ܘܗܘ ܕܟܬܒ ܐܝܟ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܠ. ܗܦܟ ܡܢ ܗ̇ ܒܠܗܘܢ: ܕܗܘ ܡܢ ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܒܫܘܚܠܦܬ ܐܣܛܘܟܣܐ ܕܟܬܒܬܗ̇ ܚܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܒܠܫܢ ܐܝܟ ܚܟܝܡ: ܘܗܘ ܡܢ ܚܠܦ ܐܝܟ ܠܐ ܒܫܘܠܦܐ ܘܡܬܚܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܕܐܣܛܘܟܣܐ. ܒܪ ܒܕܡ ܡܢ ܚܠܦ ܩܦܐ ܒܝ. ܚܠܦ ܕܝܢ ܒܝ ܙܝܛܐ.. ܚܠܦ ܕܝܢ ܟ̈ܝܦܬܐ ܟ̈ܝܦܬܐ ܐܚܪܢ. ܚܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܐܬܬܠܝܢ. ܒܚܪܬ ܗ̄ܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܠ ܟܬܒܐ: ܕܐܬܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܘܐܬܦܚܡ ܘܐܬܩܒܠ ܡܢ ܝ ܚܢܢ ܕܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܘܦܡܦܝܠܘ ܘܐܘܪܝ ܓܢܣ. ܗ̇ܘ ܡܢ ܗܟܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܬܗ ܕܗܟܣܐܦܠܐ ܗܟܢ ܐܬܟܬܒ.,

[321] Translation R. W. Thomson. I have altered Thomson's spelling of 'Leontios' here. The ms. in question is Vat. Syr. 104. For text and translation, see *idem.*, *Athanasiana Syriaca: Part I 1. De Incarnatione; 2. Epistula ad Epictetum* (CSCO 257: SS 114) (Louvain, 1965), p. IV: ܘܥܠ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܟܬܘܒܐ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܟܬܘܒܐ ܐܘܪܗܝܐ ܕܟܬܒ. ܘܥܠ ܠܐܘܢܛܝܣ ܐܘܪܫܠܡܝܐ ܐܚܐ ܕܥܡܪ ܒܗ ܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܟܬܘܒܐ.

Collation Again: Multilingual Collation

Ḥunayn is famous for undertaking the collation of manuscripts across languages—Greek, Syriac and Arabic—and it may be objected that I have only adduced examples of Syriac-speaking scholars collating Syriac manuscripts with other Syriac manuscripts. Such an objection, however fails, because we also possess evidence that Syriac-speaking scholars were engaged in multi-lingual comparisons of manuscripts well before Ḥunayn's lifetime. As I have already mentioned, Paul of Edessa would translate the *Hymns* of Severos of Antioch, along with the hymns of John bar Aphtonia and others, into Syriac in the early seventh century and later in that same century; later, Paul's translation of these same hymns would be revised by Jacob of Edessa. The autograph of Jacob's translation in fact, written in 675 AD, still survives.[322] Jacob appended to the end of his translation a note which provided the history of the text and which also represents another witness to the existence of sophisticated multi-lingual philological technique in the Syriac tradition before Ḥunayn. The hymns, Jacob wrote,

> have been translated from the Greek tongue into the Edessene or Syriac speech by the saintly Mar Paul who was bishop of the city of Edessa, while he was on the island of Cyprus, in flight from the Persians. And they have been with great care and love of toil [sc. φιλοπονία] corrected and compared with the Greek manuscripts with all possible accuracy by me the poor and sinful Jacob the lover of toil [sc. φιλόπονος] ... and with all the carefulness in my power I have distinguished between the words of the teacher and those that were added by the same Mar Paul in order that the number of rhythmical divisions might be equal when the words are pronounced, on account of the brevity and succinctness of the expressions of this Syriac language in comparison with the Greek language, by writing the words of the teacher in ink, and writing those that were added in red paint (σηρικόν); while the words which the translator altered, for the same reason, inserting one expression in place of another, in order that the measure of the period might agree with the rhythm of the Greek

[322] BL Add. 17, 134, Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, pp. 330-339.

> words, I have written for you in small, fine letters above the same groups of words between the lines, in order that you may easily know how they stand in the Greek whenever you wish to do so; and how the proofs and testimonies from the scriptural words of the Holy Scriptures in the hymns themselves run, without variation and without addition or diminution.[323]

Jacob also executed a partial revision of the Syriac text of the Old Testament where he engaged in a similar process of collating across languages. In this instance, however, he drew upon not just Greek manuscripts but also other Syriac versions when producing his translation. At the end of his translation of the book of Numbers, a colophon reads:

> Corrected from the two traditions—from that of the Syrians and from that of the Greeks—by the venerable Jacob, the Bishop of Edessa. [In] the year 1016 of Seleucus the King of the Greeks, in the month of October, in the great monastery of Tel ʻAda.[324]

Similarly, the colophon to Jacob's revision of 1 Samuel reads:

> This First Book of the Kingdoms was corrected as far as possible and with much difficulty from the different traditions—from that of the Syrians and from those of the Greeks—by the holy Jacob bishop of Edessa, in the 1016th year of the Calendar of the Greeks [AD 705], or rather of King Seleucus, the third indiction, in the great monastery of Tel ʻAda.[325]

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[323] Translation E.W. Brooks, *The Hymns of Severus and Others in the Syriac Version of Paul of Edessa as Revised by James of Edessa* in R. Graffin and F. Nau, edd., *Patrologia Orientalis* vol. 7, (Paris, 1911), pp. 801-802. I have slightly altered his translation. ܬܘܩܢܡ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܡܢܗܝܢ ܠܒܪܬ ܡܠܐ ܐܘܪܗܝܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܘ ܒܝܬ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ: ܠܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܗܢܐ، ܦܘܠܓܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܡܘܬܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܡܒܝܢܝܬܐ ܒܕ ܐܬܘܬܗ، ܒܩܦܝܘܬܐ ܒܪܬܐ. ܒܪܘܫܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܘܫܩܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܟܣܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܚܝܠܐ ܡܒܝܢܐ ܒܡ ܡܢ ܡܫܘܬܐ ܫܘܟܠܠܬܐ ܘܡܫܟܚ ܒܟܠܗ ܒܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܒܡܢܐ ܕܟܢ ܠܗ: ܠܐ ܠܡܫܒܚܘ ܘܫܪܝܪܐ ܡܚܘܝܐ ܙܢܐ ܒܟܠܐ: … ܒܗ ܒܟܠܗ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܕܐܠܝ ܡܢ ܦܘܬ ܘܦܬܝ ܠܗ: [ܘܦܘܪܣܬ] ܕܐܡܠܝܢ ܐܬܘܬܗܘܢ ܟܠܗ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ: ܘܐܡܠܝܢ ܐܬܬܘܣܦ ܡܢܗ ܕܡܪ، ܦܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܚܙܝܐ ܥܒܝܕܐ ܒܡܫܘܬܐ ܕܟܠ ܒܟܠܢ ܒܠܐ. ܡܛܠ ܒܪܝܘܬܐ ܘܡܦܫܩܘܬܐ ܕܟܝܢ ܟܠܗ ܕܡܠܟܐ ܗܢܐ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܠܘܬ ܡܠܟܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܒܗ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܒܟܬܒܬ ܒܪܝܘܬܐ: ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܬܘܣܦ ܒܫܪܝܪܘܬ ܒܟܬܒܬ. ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܦܠܝܢ ܗܘ ܒܡܫܡܫܢܐ: ܡܠܠܬܗ ܒܗ ܡܠܠܬܗ ܕܟܠܒܬܐ: ܒܗ ܗܘ ܐܪܥܢܬܐ ܐܠܘ ܐܫܪܝܪܬܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܚܙܝܐ ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܕܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ: ܠܗܘܬ ܡܠܐ ܕܟܠܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܬܐ: ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬ ܒܟܬܒܬ ܠܝ ܘܡܦܪܫܐܝܬ: ܠܟܠ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܡܙܡܪܐ ܒܗܘܬ ܗܘ ܒܪܐ: ܐܡܪܐ ܕܦܥܝܡܐܝܬ ܬܕܒܪ. ܕܐܡܪܐ ܐܬܘܬܗܘܢ ܒܡܘܢܝܐ ܒܠ ܐܡܬܝ، ܕܝ ܟܠ ܐܝܟ. ܘܕܐܡܪܐ ܐܬܪ̈ܝ ܬܫܘܒܚܬܐ ܘܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܒܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܟܠܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܒܗܘܢ ܒܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ: ܕܠܐ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܘܒܨܝܪܘܬܐ ❖

[324] Paris Syr. 26, p. 339: ܐܬܬܪܨ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ. ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܠܘܬ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܠܩܕܝܫܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ.. ܫܢܬ ܐܠܦ ܘܫܬܥܣܪܐ ܕܣܠܘܩܘܣ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ. ܒܝܪܚ ܬܫܪܝܢ ܩܕܝܡ. ܒܕܝܪܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܬܠܥܕܐ.

[325] Translation A. Salvesen, *The Books of Samuel in the Syriac Version of Jacob of Edessa* (Leiden, 1999), p. 67 (English section). I slightly altered the spelling of 'Tel ʻAda.' Syriac text in *ibid.*, p. 90, ܐܬܬܪܨ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܡܨܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܘܒܥܡܠ ܒܣܓܝܐܐܝܬ: ܡܢ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ

Careful study of Jacob's revison of 1 and 2 Samuel and a portion of 1 Kings has clarified just what exactly Jacob meant in this colophon. His translation was a revision of the Peshitta, and in undertaking this revision of the Peshitta, he relied most heavily on a Greek text from the Lucianic tradition of the Septuagint, though he also had recourse to the Syro-Hexaplaric version of the OT for his new renderings.[326] In other words, over a century before the birth of Ḥunayn and decades before the 'Abbasid revolution we have a scholar collating Greek and Syriac texts to produce an improved translation.

But of course, Jacob was not unique in employing this type of philological technique. Several years before Paul of Edessa executed his translation of the *Homilies* of Severos and others, one of the most impressive philological feats in the entire Syriac tradition was carried out by Thomas of Harkel, a scholar who, like Paul and Jacob, had been educated in the monastery of Qenneshre. In 616-617 AD, Thomas made a revision of the New Testament translation of Philoxenos. Whereas Philoxenos' motivation for sponsoring a revision of the Peshitta NT had been theological, as we have seen, studying the differences between the Harklean text and the remainders of the Philoxenian text that have survived only as quotations in Philoxenos' writings indicates that Thomas of Harkel's motivation seemed to have been philological—he sought to

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ܡܬܩܠܣܢܘܬܐ: ܗܝ ܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܬܘܒ ܬܘܪܓܡܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܬ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. ܟܠܗܝܢ، ܢܣܒܐ ܡܦܩܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ:
ܒܫܢܬ ܐܠܦ ܘܫܬܥܣܪܐ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܐܘ ܒܫܢܬ ܬܡܢܝܢ ܘܫܬ ܕܛܝ̈ܝܐ: ܐܝܟ ܫܪܒܐ ܕܐܬܬܐ ܒܕܝܪܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܬܠܕܐ.܀. Text and translation can also be found in Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 38. There is a similar colophon to be found after Jacob's revision of Genesis, in Paris Syr. 26. F. Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII de Jacques d'Édesse,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 10 (1905), p. 197, n. 3, offers the following translation, 'ici finit le premier livre de Moyse, appelé livre de la Création, lequel a été rectifié (révisé) avec soin sur deux traditions (versions), tant des Grecs que des Syriens, par le pieux évêque d'Édesse, l'an 1015 de Séleucus ([AD] 704), dans le grand monastère du village de Téléda.' cf. Salvesen, *The Books of Samuel*, p. ix, n. 5.

[326] The basis of his revision was the Peshitta text. For this and the relative dependency of Jacob's revision on Greek and Syro-Hexaplaric traditions, see R. Saley's conclusions in *The Samuel Manuscript of Jacob of Edessa: A Study in Its Underlying Textual Traditions* (Leiden, 1998), pp. 118-121.

bring the text of the Syriac New Testament into more direct formal equivalence with the Greek original.[327] The colophon attached to the Harklean Gospels refers to the history of the Philoxenian version which Thomas revised and also offers an example of the same sort of bilingual collation that we see in the *Risāla*:

> This is the book of the four Holy Gospels which was translated from the Greek language into Syriac with great precision and and much care, at first in the city of Mabbug in the year 819 of Alexander the Macedonian [508 AD], in the days of the venerable Mar Philoxenos the confessor, the bishop of the city. Afterwards, it was revised[328] with great diligence by me, Thomas the poor, on the basis of two[329] Greek manuscripts which are extremely accurate and precise, in the Enaton of the great city of Alexandria, in the holy monastery of the Antonine monks. Moreover, it was written and collated in the aforementioned place in the year 927 of Alexander, the fourth indiction [616 AD]. As to how much toil and diligence I had over it and its companion volumes, the Lord—who will recompense each person for his deeds with His righteous and correct judgment, through which we will be found worthy of the mercies which come from Him—alone knows.[330]

At exactly the same time and in precisely the same monastery of the Antonine monks where Thomas of Harkel was working at the Enaton outside of Alexandria, another man, Paul, bishop of Tella, was busy producing a hyper-literal mirror translation of

[327] For this, see S.P. Brock's 'The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis. Essays in Honor of Bruce M. Metzger*, edd. E.J. Epp and G.D. Fee (Oxford, 1981), esp. pp. 336-341 and also *idem*., 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique,' *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (1983), p. 9, reprinted in *idem*., *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature, and Theology* (Hampshire, 1992), article X.

[328] *etpaḥḥam*, literally 'collated,' but here, the word must mean 'revised' given Brock's findings about the relationship between the Philoxenian and Harklean versions. For the disagreement about the meaning of this particular word in this colophon, see Brock, 'Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harklean Problem,' p. 326.

[329] In the margin 'three' is written.

[330] Colophon found in Vat Syr 268, prepared by A. Juckel and printed in G.A. Kiraz, *Comparative Edition of the Syriac Gospels: Aligning the Sinaiticus, Curetonianus, Peshitta and Harklean Versions*, 2nd ed., vol. 4 (Piscataway, NJ, 2002), p. 369: ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܪܒܥܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܕܐܬܦܫܩ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܒܚܬܝܬܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܘܒܥܡܠܐ ܪܒܐ܆ ܒܩܕܡܝܐ ܗ݁ܘ ܒܡܒܘܓ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܒܫܢܬܐ ܕܬܡܢܡܐܐ ܘܬܫܥܣܪܐ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܘܣ ܡܩܕܘܢܝܐ. ܒܝܘܡܝ ܢܨܝܚܐ ܡܪܝ ܦܝܠܘܟܣܢܘܣ ܡܘܕܝܢܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܠܗ̇ ܕܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܐܬܦܚܡ ܕܝܢ ܒܬܪܟܢ܆ ܒܝܕ ܡܣܟܢܘܬܐ ܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܬܐܘܡܐ ܡܣܟܢܐ: ܡܢ ܬܪܝܢ (ܬܠܬܐ) ܨ̈ ܚܚܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܛܒ ܒܚܝܪܝܢ ܘܡܬܬܩܢܝܢ. ܒܐܢܛܘܢ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܢܛܘܢܝܢܐ܀ ܬܘܒ ܐܬܟܬܒ ܕܝܢ ܘܐܬܦܚܡ ܒܗ̇ ܒܕܘܟܬܐ ܕܐܡܝܪܐ܆ ܒܫܢܬܐ ܕܬܫܥܡܐܐ ܘܥܣܪܝܢ ܘܫܒܥ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܘܣ܆ ܐܢܕܝܩܛܝܘܢ ܕܐܪܒܥ. ܕܟܡܐ ܕܝܢ ܥܡܠܐ ܘܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܒܗ ܘܒܚܒܪ̈ܘܗܝ܆ ܡܪܝܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܕܥ ܠܡܦܪܥ ܠܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܐܝܟ ܥܒܕ̈ܘܗܝ: ܒܕܝܢܗ ܟܐܢܐ ܘܬܪܝܨܐ. ܕܒܗ ܢܫܬܘܐ ܠܪ̈ܚܡܐ ܕܡܢܗ ܐܡܝܢ܀

Origen's revision of the Septuagint, between 615 and 617, known as the Syro-Hexapla.[331] As with Thomas of Harkel, Paul of Tella used more than one Greek manuscript in producing his Syriac translation of the Biblical text. The colophon to Paul's translation of Exodus even reports manuscript collation which his own Greek text had previously undergone as well as collation of the Hebrew text of the Bible at the hands of Origen. 'The book of Exodus, according to the translation of the LXX.,' Paul's colophon reads,

> is ended. In the exemplar from which it was translated into the Syriac tongue was this epigraph: 'Taken from a (copy of the) Hexapla, which (was arranged) according to the (different) versions, and collated with one which was furnished with the (various readings of the) versions.' This (copy of) Exodus was also collated with an accurate exemplar, in which was this epigraph: 'The translation of the LXX. was transcribed from (a manuscript of) the Hexapla, in which the Hebrew (text) was collated according to the Hebrew (text) of the Samaritans.' And (this manuscript) was corrected by the hand of Eusebius Pamphili, as the epigraph shows; from which (manuscript) too the things taken from the Samaritan text have been previously inserted, merely as an evidence that great pains were taken with the copy.[332]

One characteristic of colophons attached to the Syro-Hexapla is that they often reproduce the colophons which were present in the Greek manuscripts from which the translations were made and these colophons allow one to see the Alexandrian philological practices of Origen entering into a Syriac-speaking context. The colophon

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[331] Paul was perhaps helped by assistants in his translational activities. For a discussion of the date of the Syro-Hexapla, based on colophons, see A. Vööbus, *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla. A fac-similie Edition of a Midyat MS. discovered 1964* (CSCO 369: Subsidia 45) (Louvain, 1975), pp. 10-13 and on the Syro-Hexapla in general, see Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, pp. 27-29.

[332] Translation Wright, slightly altered. From BL Add. 12,134. For Wright's translation, see *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 30. Syriac text: ܫܠܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܦܩܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܒܥܝܢ. ܢܘܣܚܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܢܗ ܐܬܦܫܩ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܪܘܫܡܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܗܢܐ. ܐܬܢܣܒ ܡܢ ܫܬܬ، ܦ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܡ̈ܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ. ܘܐܬܦܚܡ ܥܡ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܡ̈ܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܬܬܩܢܬ.. ܐܬܦܚܡ ܕܝܢ ܬܘܒ ܗܢܐ ܡܦܩܢܐ. ܠܘܬ ܚܕ ܢܘܣܚܐ ܚܬܝܬܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ.܀. ܐܬܟܬܒ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܒܥܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܟܣܐܦܠܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗ̇ܝ، ܒܥܒܪܝܬܐ ܡܦܚܡܐ ܗܘܬ. ܐܝܟ ܗ̇ܝ، ܒܥܒܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܡܪ̈ܝܐ. ܘܐܬܬܪܨܬ ܗܘܬ ܒܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܗܘ ܕܦܡܦܝܠܘܣ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗ̇ܘ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܡܫܘܕܥ ܗܘܐ. ܡܢ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܫܡܪ̈ܝܐ ܩܕܡ ܐܬܬܣܝܡ܆ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܠܘܬ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܬܬܓܒܠ ܗ̇ܘ ܢܘܣܚܐ. NB: Wright notes that there is some uncertainty about how to render the phrase ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܐܦ ܡ̈ܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܬܬܩܢܬ. Vööbus provides the text of this colophon, taken from a different manuscript, with translation and brief comments in *The Pentateuch in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla*, pp. 40-42; he also provides the text and translation of two other Syro-Hexaplaric colophons from the Pentateuch (Genesis and Numbers) in *ibid*., pp. 39-40, 42-43.

to the Minor Prophets in Ceriani's massive photolithographic edition of half of the Syro-Hexapla provides a vivid example of one such colophon:

> The book of the Twelve Prophets is ended. It was translated from the tradition of the Seventy, those who translated the Holy Scriptures from the Hebrew language to Greek in Alexandria the Great City, in the days of Ptolemy, the King of Egypt, before the coming of Christ. Now the Greek book—from which this Syriac book of the Twelve Prophets was translated—was collated, as it was inscribed in it, from an ancient manuscript (from which were also taken many things from the version [lit. tradition]) in which it was inscribed, along with these following things. 'The Twelve Prophets were taken from a manscript [written] according to the version of the Tetrapla. Pamphilios and Eusebios precisely made corrections.' This book was then translated into Syriac in the city of Alexandria in the month of January of the year 928 of Alexander [AD 617], the fifth indiction.[333]

Biblical Studies as Philological Incubator

I have already cited a number of examples from Biblical manuscripts and will cite many more examples of scholarship related to the Bible in Syriac in order to demonstrate that Ḥunayn was employing nothing more than a philological approach that had developed in the Syriac tradition in Late Antiquity. Though understanding the Baghdad Greco-Syriac-Arabic translation movement of secular Greek texts in the context of a tradition of Syriac scholarship that had developed with relation to biblical and patristic texts may seem to be incongruous or inappropriate, viewing men like Ḥunayn or Gabriel primarily as figures concerned with secular matters is a distorting

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[333] See A.M. Ceriani, ed., *Codex Syro-Hexaplaris Ambrosianus Photolithographice editus* (*Monumenta sacra et Profana ex Codicibus Praesertim*, vol. 7) (Milan, 1874), fol. 114v: ܫܠܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܥܣܪ ܢܒܝ̈ܐ ܕܐܬܦܫܩ ܡܢ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܒܥܝܢ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܝܘ̈ܡܝ ܦܛܠܡܐܘܣ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܨܪܝܢ ܩܕܡ ܡܐܬܝܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܦܫܩܘ: ܠܟܬܒܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܝܘܢܝܐ: ܒܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ. ܡܚܒܢ ܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܟܬܒܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܢܗ ܐܬܦܫܩ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܬܪ̈ܥܣܪ ܢܒܝ̈ܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܪܫܝܡ ܗܘܐ ܒܠܘܬܗ. ܡܢ ܨܚܚܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ. ܡܢ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܐܬܢܣܒܘ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ. ܕܒܗ ܪܫܝܡ ܗܘܐ ܘܥܡܗܝܢ܀ ܐܬܢܣܒܘ ܬܪ̈ܥܣܪ ܢܒܝ̈ܐ. ܡܢ ܨܚܚܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܪܒܥ ܦܬܓ̈ܐ܀ ܦܡܦܝܠܘܣ ܘܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ ܬܪܨܘ܀ ܐܬܦܫܩ ܕܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܒܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܒܝܪܚ ܟܢܘܢ ܐܚܪܝ.. ܕܫܢܬ ܬܫܥܡܐܐ ܘܥܣܪܝܢ ܘܬܡܢܐ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܘܣ. ܐܢܕܩܛܝܘܢܐ ܕܚܡܫܐ܀ For other similar colophons, see *ibid.*, fol. 42r (Song of Songs), 66r (Proverbs) and 70r (Ecclesiastes),

prism which obscures their firm rootedness in the traditions of Syriac-speaking Christian scholarship of Late Antiquity. It should not be forgotten that though we think of Ḥunayn primarily as a translator of secular texts written by authors like Galen and Aristotle, he was also a Biblical translator who found time to carry out a translation of the Septuagint into Arabic which was regarded by many of his time as the most sound available.[334] Moreover, Ḥunayn was a deacon in the church and wrote at least nine separate works on religious topics.[335] Timothy's *Letter 47* on the Syro-Hexapla and Biblical and patristic scholarship in the Late Antique Syriac tradition is, therefore, very germane to providing a proper and full context to the celebrated translational activities of ninth-century Baghdad. As a Biblical translator, Ḥunayn would have been keenly aware of the diversity of versions in Syriac, in addition to the variety of translations available of other patristic texts. His activities of translating and revising the works of Galen represented an application to the domain of philosophy techniques that Syriac-speaking scholars had developed in the area of Biblical and patristic translation. Viewing these different areas of translation and study in isolation from one another forces an artificial distinction on the material—often the same men worked on both biblical or patristic 'religious' texts as well as philosophical 'secular' ones. In addition to his translation of Aristotle's Κατηγορίαι, for example, Jacob of

[334] See S. K. Samir, 'Maqāla fī 'l-ājāl li-Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq,' *al-Machriq* 65 (1991), p. 414. This translation is unfortunately no longer extant, see Brock, 'The Syriac Background to Ḥunayn's Translation Techniques,' p. 153.

[335] See S.K. Samir, 'Maqāla fī 'l-ājāl li-Ḥunayn b. Isḥāq,' pp. 413-414, for a listing of ten different works by Ḥunayn which had a religious character (one of these was his Biblical translation). See *ibid*., p. 404 for Ḥunayn as a deacon (which Samir infers from medieval reports that he wore a *zunnār*). For the report that Ḥunayn 'would wear a *zunnār*,' see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 262.

Edessa also made a revision of the Old Testament and also revised translations of the *Cathedral Homilies* and *Hymns* of Severos of Antioch.[336]

Both Ḥunayn and the Paris *Organon* could at times adopt a critical attitude toward previous translations, as we have seen. Such an awareness of deficiencies in previous translations can be readily found in the Syriac scholarly tradition out of which both Ḥunayn and the Paris *Organon* emerged; this was not some unique sensibility that only appeared once Muslim patrons began funding secular translations. It was a part of the internal dynamic of the Syriac tradition and was a development which surfaced as attitudes changed towards translation technique and what different estimations of what amounted to a good translation evolved.

I have already indicated that one hallmark of the Greco-Syriac tradition is the constant retranslation of previously translated texts as attitudes towards what made for a desirable translation shifted between the fourth and seventh centuries. The various revisions and fresh translations of different philosophical texts evidenced in the marginalia of the Paris *Organon* and the medical translations referred to in the *Risāla* are only two examples of this phenomenon. I have just mentioned Jacob of Edessa's work in this area: he revised the sixth-century translation of the *Cathedral Homilies* of Severos of Antioch made by Paul of Kallinikos as well as the early seventh-century translation of the *Hymns* of Severos and others made by Paul of Edessa. But more than

[336] On Jacob's revision of the Old Testament, see W. Baars, 'Ein Neugefundenes Bruchstück aus der Syrischen Bibelrevision des Jakob von Edessa,' *Vetus Testamentum* 18 (1968), pp. 548-554; A. Salvesen, 'The Purpose of Jacob of Edessa's Version of Samuel,' *The Harp* 8-9 (July 1995-1996), pp. 117-126 and *idem*., *The Books of Samuel in the Syriac Version of Jacob of Edessa* (Leiden, 1999), pp. ix-xv. On his revision of Paul of Kallinikos's translation of the *Cathedral Homilies* of Severos, see M. Brière, 'Introduction générale aux homélies de Sévère d'Antioche,' in *Les homilae cathedrales de Sévère d'Antioche: traduction syriaque de Jacques d'Édesse* (PO 29) (Paris, 1960), pp. 7-72. On the translation of the *Hymns* of Severos and others, see E.W. Brooks, *The Hymns of Severus and Others in the Syriac Version of Paul of Edessa as revised by James of Edessa*, (PO 6) (Paris, 1911), pp. 5-7.

Severos experienced revision.[337] Basil of Caesarea's *De Spiritu Sancto* was translated in the late fourth century and then re-translated most likely in the seventh.[338] Similarly, a collection of twenty-eight homilies of Basil was translated into Syriac in the fifth century and another version was then produced in the seventh.[339] There furthermore seem to have been two translations of the *Constitutiones Asceticae*, attributed to Basil in the Syriac tradition. There also may have been two translations of Basil's *Hexaemeron*, one done by Athanasios II of Balad in AD 666-667.[340] The works of (Ps) Dionysios were first translated into Syriac in the sixth century by Sergios of Resh'ayna and then revised by Phokas of Edessa in the late seventh century and may have also been re-translated or revised by Athanasios II of Balad in the seventh century as well.[341] The current underdeveloped state of research on the works of Gregory of Nyssa in Syriac

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[337] For what follows, I rely in part on D. King, 'Paul of Callinicum and his place in Syriac Literature,' *Le muséon* 120 (2007), pp. 327-349, esp. 327-328.

[338] See D.G.K. Taylor, *The Syriac Versions of the* De Spiritu Sancto *by Basil of Caesarea*, (CSCO 576: SS 228) (Louvain, 1999), pp. XXV-XLII.

[339] See P.J. Fedwick, 'The Translations of the Works of Basil before 1400,' in *idem*., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, vol. 2 (Toronto, 1981), pp. 449-451 and S.P. Brock, 'Basil's *Homily on Deut. xv 9*: Some remarks on the Syriac manuscript tradition,' in J. Dümmer, ed., *Texte und Textkritik: Eine Aufsatzsammlung* (Berlin, 1987), pp. 62-66. On the homilies, also see S.P. Brock, 'Traduzioni Siriache degli Scritti di Basilio,' in *Basilio tra Oriente e Occidente*, edd. É. Baudry, S. Brock, et al. (Magnano, BI, 2001), pp. 168-173. This latter article contains valuable information about the manuscript tradition of the works of Basil in Syriac.

[340] For these points, see Fedwick, 'The Translations of the Works of Basil before 1400,' pp. 448-449. See also I. Barsoum's comments (*al-Lu'lu' al-manthūr fī ta'rīkh al-'ulūm wa-'l-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (repr. Glane, 1975), p. 590) about MS Za'farān 241 containing references to a translation of Basil's *Hexaemeron* by Athanasios in AD 666-667.

[341] On the Syriac translations of the corpus of Ps.-Dionysios, see Strothmann, *Das Sakrament der Myron-Weihe*, vol. 2, pp. XI-LX, esp. pp. XII, XIX-XXXII and P. Sherwood, 'Sergius of Reshaina and the Syriac Versions of the Pseudo-Denis,' *Sacris Erdiri* 4 (1952), pp. 174-184; J.-M. Hornus, 'Le corpus dionysien en syriaque,' *Parole de l'orient* 1 (1970), pp. 69-93 builds on Sherwood and corrects him. On the manuscript tradition of the Dionysian Corpus in Syriac, see G. Wiessner, *Zur Handschriftenüberlieferung der syrischen Fassung des Corpus Dionyiacum* (Göttingen, 1971). For Sergios' translation, see I. Perczel, 'Sergius of Reshaina's Syriac Translation of the *Dionysian Corpus*. Some Preliminary Remarks,' in C. Baffioni, ed., *La diffusione dell' eredità classica nell' età tardoantica e medievale: Filologia, storia, dottrina* (Alessandria, 2000) pp. 79-94. Van Esbroeck 'La triple preface syriaque de Phocas,' pp. 171-179 gives a FT of Phokas' 'triple preface' to his Syriac translation. A version by Athanasios is suggested by Timothy I's request to Pethion: 'Please search out and copy for us Dionysios in the translation of Athanasios or that of Phokas,' (trans. Brock), n. 184 and n. 185, above and also cf. I. Barsoum, *al-Lu'lu' al-manthūr fī ta'rīkh al-'ulūm wa-'l-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (repr. Glane, 1975), p. 590.

prevents us from stating whether they underwent revision or retranslation,[342] but we do know that Basil's 38th Epistle, actually the *De differentia essentiae et hypostaseos* of Gregory of Nyssa, was translated into Syriac and then revised at least two different times.[343] The *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen were first translated at the end of the fifth century, experienced a revision in the sixth, and were revised again in 623-624 by Paul of Edessa, using a different group of Greek manuscripts. Athanasios II of Balad seems to have produced a corrected version of Paul of Edessa's translation which moved it even closer to the Greek.[344] The poems of Gregory Nazianzen were translated in 665 by Januarios Kandidatos and then translated again in 804-805 by Theodosios of Edessa.[345] The *Homilies* of John Chrysostom on Matthew experienced two separate translations in the fifth century.[346] We also have two different Syriac translations of Proklos of

[342] See M.F.G. Parmentier, 'Syriac Translations of Gregory of Nyssa,' *Orientalia Lovaniensia Periodica* 20 (1989), pp. 143-193 for a survey of the works of Gregory of Nyssa in Syriac. Also cf. Parmentier's comments, p. 143: 'It is not easy to say whether we can assume that (at least some of) the works of Gregory of Nyssa were translated more than once.'

[343] M.F.G. Parmentier, 'Gregory of Nyssa's *De differentia essentiae et hypostaseos* (CPG 3196) in Syriac translation,' in H.R. Drobner and C. Klock, edd., *Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der Christlichen Spätantike* (Leiden, 1990), pp. 17-55.

[344] See J.-C. Haelewyck, *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera: Versio Syriaca I: Oratio XL* (Turnhout, 2001), pp. VI-XIII; A.B. Schmidt, *Sancti Gregorii Nazinzeni Opera: Versio Syriaca II. Orationes XIII, XLI* (Turnhout, 2002), pp. X-XII; J.-C. Haelewyck, *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera: Versio Syriaca III: Orationes XXVII, XXXVIII, XXXIX*, (Turnhout, 2005), pp. V-VI; *idem.*, *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera: Versio Syriaca IV: Orationes XXVIII, XXIX, XXX et XXXI* (Turnhout, 2007), pp. V-VI; S.P. Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 30-31. Also cf. A. de Halleux, 'La version syriaque des *Discours* de Grégoire de Nazianze,' in J. Mossay, ed., *II. Symposium Nazianzenum: Louvain la-Neuve, 25-28 août 1981*, (Paderborn, 1983), pp. 109-110. See also, A. Schmidt, 'The Literary Tradition of Gregory of Nazianzus in Syriac Literature and its Historical Context,' *The Harp* 11-12 (1998-1999), 127-134; cf. p. 128: 'It was in 624 that the famous translator and syriac [sic] author Paul, bishop of Edessa, subjected the homilies to a new translation. The first translation had not only been thoroughly revised, but was translated anew on the basis of different Greek manuscripts.'

[345] See see I. Guidi, 'Di un' Iscrizione Sepolcrale Siriaca e della Versione dei Carmi di S. Gregorio Nazianzeno fatta da Candidato di Âmed,' in *Actes du dixième congrès international des orientalistes. Session de Genève 1894*, part 3 (Leiden, 1896), pp. 78, 82; Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1, col. 363, and Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 259, 276.

[346] J.W. Childers, 'Chrysostom's Exegetical Homilies on the New Testament in Syriac Translation,' in E.A. Livingstone, ed., *Studia Patristica* 33 (Leuven, 1997), pp. 510-511.

Constantinople's important *Tomus ad Armenios*.[347] Philoxenos of Mabbug sponsored a revision of the Syriac translation of the symbols of Nicaea and Constantinople in ca. 500-501.[348] The *Explanatio Duodecim Capitulorum* of Cyril of Alexandria was translated into Syriac probably before 484 AD and then a revised translation was produced in the first half of the sixth century.[349] The Syriac version of the *Lives of the Prophets* goes back perhaps to the sixth-century; there seems to have been some slight revision of the translation at a later date, possibly the seventh century.[350] The *Life of Epiphanios* was probably translated into Syriac in the sixth century and then a revised translation was produced, most likely in the seventh.[351] Apart from new translations and revisions, Syriac preserves a number of Greek texts in different recensions. There is an abbreviated and a longer version of Athanasios' *Expositio in Psalmos*.[352] Syriac has a long

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[347] See L. van Rompay, 'Proclus of Constantinople's "Tomus Ad Armenios" in the Post-Chalcedonian Tradition,' in C. Laga, J.A. Munitiz and L. van Rompay, edd., *After Chalcedon: Studies in Theology and Church History Offered to Professor Albert van Roey for his Seventieth Birthday* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta* 18) (Leuven, 1985), pp. 428-433, 437-449.

[348] See A. de Halleux, 'La philoxénienne du symbole,' in *Symposium Syriacum, 1976 : célébré du 13 au 17 septembre 1976 au Centre culturel Les Fontaines de Chantilly, France : communications* (OCA 205) (Rome, 1978), pp. 295-315.

[349] D. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria: A study in Translation Technique* (CSCO 626: *Subsidia* 123) (Louvain, 2008), pp. 315-318. For the dating of these translations, see pp. 356-357. King suggests the revision may date to the time of Paul of Kallinikos' work (the 520s and 530s), but also suggests that the revision may in fact have been executed before 521 AD.

[350] See S.P. Brock, 'The *Lives of the Prophets in Syriac*: Some Soundings,' in C. Hempel and J.M. Lieu, edd., *Bibilical Traditions in Transmission* (Leiden/Boston, 2006), pp. 21-37. (cf. p. 22: 'This text represents basically the same translation, but with some revision on the basis of the Greek; this revision displays a number of of features characteristic of the translation practice of the Syrohexapla (and of the seventh century in general)…' Also cf. p. 32 for comments on this revision.

[351] See S.P. Brock, 'Two Syriac Translations of the Life of Epiphanios,' in J. Herrin, M. Mullet, and C. Otten-Froux, edd., *Mosaic: Festschrift for A.H.S. Megaw* (Athens, 2001), pp. 19-25.

[352] See R.W. Thomson, *Athanasiana Syriaca Part IV: Expositio in Psalmos. 1. Abbreviated Version 2. Longer Version* (CSCO 386-387: SS 167-168).

and a short recension of the *Life* of Anthony.[353] There are also at least three different recensions of the *Physiologos* preserved in Syriac.[354]

The best known and most thoroughly studied case of translation, revision and re-translation of a particular text in the Syriac tradition is unsurprisingly that of the Syriac Bible, which saw a dizzying number of versions of both the Old and New Testaments produced between the second and seventh centuries, including the Diatessaron, the Peshitta Old Testament, the Old Syriac Gospels, the Peshitta New Testament, the Philoxenian New Testament, the Syro-Lucianic (possibly Philoxenian) Old Testament, the Harklean New Testament, the Syro-Hexaplaric Old Testament and the Old Testament revision of Jacob of Edessa.[355] At the risk of overly schematic simplification, these translations are initially free and easy to read and become increasingly literal; by the seventh century, the Syro-Hexaplar Old Testament and the Harklean New Testament are wooden 'mirror' translations which reflect every particle of the Greek *Vorlage*. The shift has been described as being from reader-oriented to text-oriented translations.[356]

The proliferation of Biblical translations was something that Syriac-speaking Christians themselves were keenly aware of and could comment on. It is here that we

[353] For both these, see R. Draguet, *La vie primitive de s. Antoine conservée en syriaque* (CSCO 417-418: SS 183-184) (Louvain, 1980).

[354] See A. van Lantschoot, 'Fragments syriaques du Physiologus,' *Le Muséon* 72 (1959), pp. 37-38. NB: K. Ahrens, *Das 'Buch der Naturgegenstände'* (Kiel, 1892) also contains an amalgamation of material from the *Physiologos* and other sources. See *ibid*., pp. 4-5.

[355] The best introduction to the history of the Bible in Syriac is S.P. Brock's, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 2nd ed., (Piscataway, NJ, 2006).

[356] Sebastian Brock has provided us with our understanding of the history of Syriac translation technique. For these points, see (among other things), his 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique,' *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 221 (1983), pp. 1-14, reprinted in *idem*., *Studies in Syriac Christianity: History, Literature, and Theology* (Hampshire, 1992). Also see his 'The Syriac Background to Ḥunayn's Translation Technique,' which takes his treatment of the history of Syriac translation technique into the Islamic period. D. King, however, provides a salutary caution against 'impos[ing] a linear model of "development" upon Syriac translation history.' See his remarks in *idem*., 'Paul of Callinicum and his Place in Syriac Literature,' *Le Muséon* 120 (2007), pp. 337-338.

find remarks of later translators and writers on the quality of earlier translators which are akin to the critical remarks we encounter in Ḥunayn's *Risāla* and the Paris *Organon*. In his *Letter 47*, Timothy I notes that the Syro-Hexapla as a translation is quite different from the Peshitta translation which was in use among East Syrian Christians:

> It has endless differences from the text which we employ. I am of the opinion that the person who translated this exemplar in our possession was working from the versions of Thedotion, Aquila and Symmachus, since for the most part there is a greater resemblance to them than to the Septuagint.[357]

Some two hundred and fifty years before Timothy penned those lines, a man named Paphnutios wrote a letter to Moses of Aggel at some point in the middle of the sixth century,[358] asking him to translate the *Glaphyra* of Cyril of Alexandria into Syriac.[359] In Moses' reply, which amounted to a preface to his translation of the *Glaphyra*, he made a similar reference to the existence of different renderings of the Bible:

> I implore the reader therefore to consider the text of this tome, for it is profound. When he finds a citation (χρῆσις) from the Holy Scriptures—for they are noted in the translation—let him not be in doubt if they do not agree with the [Biblical] codices of the Syrians, since the versions and translations of the Scriptures are very diverse. If he wishes to find the truth [of this statement], he will be amazed at the differences which exist between the tradition of the Syriac [i.e., the Peshitta] and the Greek language [of the original] when he encounters the version of the New [Testament] and David [sc. the Psalms] that Polycarp, whose soul is at rest, the Chorepiscopos made into Syriac for Philoxenos of Mabbug, the faithful teacher who is worthy of good memory.[360]

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[357] Translation Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 247. Syriac text in O. Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos I über biblische Studien des 9 Jahrhunderts,' p. 304: ܡܦܩܬܢܐ ܠܗ ܕܝܢ. ܕܗܘ ܕܐܦܩ ܠܝ ܣܒܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܒܐܝܕܝܢ: ܡܢ ܗܢܝܢ ܕܬܐܕܘܛܝܘܢ ܘܕܐܩܘܠܐ ܘܕܣܘܡܡܟܘܣ ܦܫܩ. ܐܝܟ ܕܒܝܘܬܪ ܟܠܗ ܝܬܝܪ ܠܘܬ ܗܢܘܢ: ܐܘ ܓܝܪ ܫܒܥܝܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܡܘܬܐ.

[358] On Moses of Aggel see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 160-161. Assemani put his *floruit* ca. 550; see *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 2 (Rome, 1721), p. 82.

[359] See I. Guidi, 'Mosè di Aghel e Simeone Abbate,' *Rendiconti delle sedute della R. Accademia dei Lincei: Classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche* 4/2 (1886), p. 401: 'But as for this Γλαφυρά, which I am unable to render into Aramaic, I urge your zeal to labor and translate it…' ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܓܠܦܘܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܠܝ ܕܐܦܫܩܝܗ ܠܐܪܡܝܐ. ܡܦܝܣܢܐ ܠܚܦܝܛܘܬܟ. ܕܬܥܡܠ ܘܬܦܫܩܝܗ…

[360] Guidi, 'Mosè di Aghel e Simeone Abbate, p.404. ܡܦܝܣ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܩܪܘܝܐ. ܕܢܚܙܐ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܬܘܡܗ ܕܝܢ ܥܡܝܩܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܢܚܙܐ. ܘܟܕ ܡܫܟܚ ܟܪ̈ܣܝܣ ܡܢ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܩܕܝܫ̈ܐ: ܕܪ̈ܫܝܡܢ ܒܗ ܒܦܘܫܩܐ. ܠܐ ܢܬܦܠܓ. ܐܠܐ ܫܠܡܢ ܥܡ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܕܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܣܓܝ ܡܫܚܠܦܢ ܡܦܩ̈ܬܐ ܘܡܬܪ̈ܓܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ. ܘܐܢ ܨܒܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ

Jacob of Edessa, writing about a century and a half later, shows much of the same critical awareness of diversity in various Biblical translations. In a scholion on Joshua 8:30 ("'Joshua built an altar for the Lord God of Israel on Mount Gabala"), Jacob notes that 'In Deuteronomy, in the manuscript of the Samaritans, it is written that Moses told them to build the altar "on the Mountain of Gerazim," and not on that of Gabala.'[361] A knowledge of variants could explain a number of textual aporias and difficulties which confronted the careful student of the Bible and its history. Some have argued that Eliezer the Damascene was actually the same as Ishmael, Jacob notes in another scholion. Among the reasons that this cannot be the case is that we know who Eliezer's mother was and she was called Masek and not Hagar.

> Thirdly, the name of the mother of Eliezer is known and is brought forth in the Divine Scripture here, as can be seen in the manuscripts of the Scriptures in the version of the Greeks—that which was rendered from the Hebrew language to Greek by the seventy-two translators [of] the Hebrew writings—in that, instead of these things, 'Look, I have made my my heir to be Eliezer, the son of Mesek the Damascene, my steward' [Gen. 15:2] is written. Mesek, therefore, is not Hagar and Hagar is not Mesek. Eliezer the son of Mesek is not Ishmael the son Hagar. The son of Hagar, Ishmael is not—is not—Eliezer the son of Mesek as it

ܢܥܒܕ. ܒܗ ܡܫܬܡܠܝܢܘܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܚܕܬܐ ܘܕܕܘܝܕ. ܦܠܘܩܪܦܘܣ ܢܚ ܢܦܫܐ ܟܘܪܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ: ܠܣܘܪܝܐ ܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܐ ܐܟܣܢܝܐ ܕܡܒܘܓ ܠ ܣܘܪܝܐܝܬ. ܡܬܕܡܪ ܒܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܝܬ ܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܕܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܡܢ ܠܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܢܚܘܐ.This Syriac here is somewhat involved. Brock, 'The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' in E.J. Epp and G.D. Fee, edd., *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis: Essays in Honour of Bruce M. Metzger*, p. 325, n. 2, offers the following translation: 'if the reader finds quotations from the holy scriptures in this translation of Cyril let him not be worried if they do not agree with MSS (of the Bible) in Syriac, see that there is great variation between the (different) editions and (versional) traditions of the scriptures. If the reader wants to verify this, should he come across the edition of the NT and of the Psalter which the late chorepiskopos Polycarp made in Syriac for the faithful teacher Aksenaya' of Mabbûg worthy of blessed memory, he will be amazed at the difference between the Syriac (i.e., Peshitta) and the Greek.' This text and an LT can also be found in Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 2, pp. 82-83.

[361] Syriac text in J. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 1, (Rome, 1719), p. 489: ܘܒܢܐ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܕܒܚܐ ܠܡܪܝܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܐܝܣܪܐܝܠ ܒܛܘܪܐ ܕܓܒܠ ܒܬܢܝܢ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܒܨܚܚܐ ܕܫܡܪ̈ܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܘܫܐ ܕܢܒܢܘܢ ܡܕܒܚܐ ܒܛܘܪܐ ܕܓܪܙܝܡ ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܗܘ ܕܓܒܠ

has been seen by some people to be the case. On the basis of these things, therefore, it is known that Eliezer is not Ishmael.[362]

In his seventh letter to John the Stylite of Litarb, Jacob deals with questions of chronology and how many years have passed since Creation—John was unsure about just how many years that had been. There have been a number of authors of chronicles, Jacob tells John, both before and after Eusebios—he lists Africanos, Clement of Alexandria, Andraos, Magnos, Hippolytos, Metrodoros, Andronikos—but 'none of them has been able to bring forth a chronicle which agreed with that of the others, not only in the comparison and fixing of the dates of kingdoms against one another, but they also have not spoken in agreement about the number of years in an era. Instead, some have recorded more [years], some have written down less.' The explanation for the diversity of chronological schema was very easily explained: 'This is,' Jacob wrote, 'because of differences in their versions of the Holy Scriptures.'[363] Jacob would appeal

[362] Syriac text in G. Phillips, ed. and trans. *Scholia on Passages of the Old Testament by Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa* (London, 1864), p. ܗ: ܕܬܬܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܦ ܥܡܗ ܕܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܐܠܝܥܙܪ ܚܕ ܘܡܬܬܠܬܬܐ ܒܒܝܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܒܗ ܒܒܘܒܠܐ ܗܕܐ܂ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܡܚܙܝܐ ܡܢ ܫܡܐ ܕܒܠܒܐ ܕܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܠܘܬ ܡܘܫܐ: ܗ̇ܝ، ܒܗܬ ܕܐܬܬܦܩܕ ܡܢ ܠܥܠܐ ܒܒܪܐ ܠܐܒܘܗܝ ܒܥܕ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܡܦܩܢܐ ܗܦܟܐ ܕܒܒܪܝܬܐ. ܒܗ̇، ܕܒܠܗܘܢ ܢܠܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܐܠܝܥܙܪ ܒܪܗ̇ ܕܡܐܣܘܩ ܕܡܣܡܣܬܐ ܒܪ ܒܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܝ. ܡܕܝܢ ܡܐܣܘܩ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗ̇ܝ ܗ ܒܪ. ܘܗܘ ܒܪ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗ̇ܝ ܡܐܣܘܩ. ܘܐܠܝܥܙܪ ܒܪܗ̇ ܕܡܐܣܘܩ: ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܐܝܫܡܥܝܠ ܒܪܗ̇ ܕܗܘ ܒܪ. ܘܒܪܗ̇ ܕܗܘ ܒܪ ܐܝܫܡܥܝܠ: ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ؛ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܐܠܝܥܙܪ ܒܪܗ̇ ܕܡܐܣܘܩ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܣܬܒܪܬ ܠܐܢܫܝܢ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܒܥܠܬ ܕܡܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܝܕܝܥܐ: ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܗܘܐ ܐܠܝܥܙܪ ܐܝܫܡܥܝܠ My translation. Phillip's ET in *ibid*., pp. 9-10, should be used with caution. As Phillips points out (p. 9, n. 7), at Genesis 15:2, the LXX translators understood the בן־משק in the Hebrew ובן־משק ביתי הוא דמשק אליעזר as a proper name and transliterated it into Greek in their translation: ὁ δὲ υἱὸς Μασεκ τῆς οἰκογενοῦς μου οὗτος Δαμασκὸς Ελιεζερ

[363] F. Nau, 'Lettre de Jacques d'Édesse a Jean le stylite sur la chronologie biblique et la date de la naissance du messie,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 5 (1900) pp. 584-585: ܘܥܕ ܡܢܝܢܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܘܝ ܠܡܐܡܪܘ ܡܬܚܫܒܢܘܬ ܘܒܢܝܐ ܕܫܢܝܐ ܠܪܘܫܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܗ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܡܘܠܕܐ ܘܒܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܙܒܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܚܕܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܒܗ ܒܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܫܢܝܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܐܫܬܘܝܘ ܐܡܪܘ ܐܢܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܣܓܝ ܟܬܒܘ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܨܝܪ ܟܬܒܘ. ܘܗܕܐ ܡܛܠ ܫܘܚܠܦܝܗܘܢ ܕܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܬ̈ܒܝ ܩܘܕܫܐ FT in *ibid*., p. 591. NB: I have corrected Nau's Syriac text which incorrectly has ܕܟܬ̈ܒܝ ܩܘܕܫܐ for the ܟܬ̈ܒܝ ܩܘܕܫܐ present in BL Add. 12,172, fol. 92b. Also, note Jacob's further comments, in *ibid*., p. 585: ܠܗܠܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܠܐ ܫܘܐ ܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܒܡܬܚܫܒܢܘܬ ܘܒܢܝܐ ܗ̇، ܕܒܥܒܕ. ܡܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܝ ܕܐܬܬܕܟܪ ܒܗ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܫܢܐ ܐܢܬ ܘܡܢܐ ܐܢܬ ܘܡܬܦܬܠ ܐܢܬ. ܡܛܠ ܕܡܫܠܡ ܘܒܢ̈ܝ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܐܘܣܒܝܘܣ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܟܬܒܘ ܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܟܠܬ

to differing Biblical versions more than once in his correspondence with John. In his thirteenth letter to this stylite, written between 704 and 708,[364] Jacob takes up the question of a textual variant in Jonah 3:4:

> Now concerning the matter of ‘forty days’ or ‘three,’ I have the following to say. In the versions[365] of the Greeks, ‘three days’ is written and not ‘forty.’ Know well that, for my part, I agree with the reading ‘three days’ because it would have caused more amazement for the people: it was alarming and brought about sorrow that leads to fear and repentance—moreso than the reading ‘forty’ would have, implicit in which is much delay and which would have given them the ease of thinking either that the reality [of Nineveh’s imminent destruction] was not true or that, if it was true, they could flee and leave the city, going out from it and remaining far away from it until the ordained period had passed.[366]

Jacob’s correspondent, John of Litarb (who also exchanged letters with George of the Arabs) was a very close reader of the Scripture. Even the smallest detail might trigger a question. Some of the most challenging passages for translators both today and in the early medieval world were ones with rare vocabulary words. A single verse in 2 Kings 4 referred to some sort of wild fruit and John wanted to know which fruit exactly it was:

> You have also asked, ‘what are these fruits of the wild vine, about which it is written that one of the sons of the prophets gathered and threw into a pot (κάδος)’?[367]

ܐܝܟ ܕܒܫܘ̈ܥܒܕܢܐ ܕܒܐܪ̈ܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܦܪܫܘ ܘܗܘܘ ܫܢ̈ܝܐ ܐ̈ܝܟ ܠܡܒܕܪܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܒܠܒܘܬ: ܒܪ ܠܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܒܕܪܘ ܡܢ ܒܠܒ̈ܐ ܗܘ، ܕܫܬܬܐܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܘܡܒܢܝܐ ܡܫܩܠܐܢܬ ܐܫܠܡܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܒܠܒܘ܀

[364] For this date, see F. Nau, ‘Traduction des lettres XII et XIII de Jacques d’Édesse (exégèse biblique)’ *Revue de l’orient chrétien* 10 (1905), p. 197.

[365] Lit. ‘traditions.’

[366] Syriac text in W. Wright, ‘Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,’ *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), p. ܣܝ. ܘܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܗܝ، ܕܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܝܘ̈ܡܝܢ ܐܘ ܕܬܠܬܐ ܬܘܒ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܝ ܠܡܐܡܪ. ܕܒܡܫܠܡܢܘ̈ܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝ̈ܐ. ܗܝ، ܕܬܠܬܐ ܝܘ̈ܡܝܢ ܟܬܝܒܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܝ، ܕܐܪܒܥܝܢ. ܘܐܢܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܥ ܠܟ، ܕܗܕܐ ܗܝ، ܕܬܠܬܐ ܝܘ̈ܡܝܢ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܝ، ܝܬܝܪܐ ܡܬܡܗܢܝܬܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܠܥܡܐ: ܘܡܬܒܥܬܢܝܬܐ ܗܘܬ ܘܡܥܒܕܢܝܬܐ: ܠܘܬ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܘܠܘܬ ܡܬܬܘܝܢܘܬܐ: ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܗܝ، ܕܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܗܝ ܬܘܚܪܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ: ܘܝܗܒܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܦܫܝܩܘܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܝ، ܕܢܬܚܫܒܘܢ. ܐܘ ܕܠܐ ܫܪܝܪ ܗܘ ܨܒܘܬܐ: ܐܘ ܕܐܢ ܫܪܝܪ: ܢܥܪܩܘܢ ܘܢܫܒܩܘܢܗ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܟܕ ܢܦܩܝܢ ܡܢܗ: ܘܡܬܪܚܩܝܢ ܠܒܪ ܠܪܘܚܩܐ ܡܢܗ: ܥܕܡܐ ܕܥܒܪ ܙܒܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܬܚܡ܀ FT available in Nau, ‘Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,’ p. 269.

[367] 2 Kings 4:39

Jacob, however, was unable to answer. The manuscript tradition in Greek and in Syriac disagreed, he explained, and he was left to simply outline the divergences in the tradition and fall back upon his own speculation in the case of this textual difficulty.

> Now, concerning things like these, O Brother, you researcher and lover of labor (sc. φιλόπονος), know well that neither I nor someone else can decide the matter with precision, since what is written in manuscripts among the Syrians as 'wild vine,' is written 'young plant in the field' among the Greeks, and instead of 'fruits,' 'wild cucumbers,' and instead of 'went out to collect wild herbs,' 'to collect *ariūth*' (sc. αριωθ) is written in manuscripts among the Greeks. '*Ariūth*' is a Hebrew word which is unknown, even to me and even to the Greeks who called it thus in their Scriptures. As to what it is, therefore, do not marvel that I have said that I do not have a ready response concerning things like this, because I do not completely rely in my answers to you on Hebrew vocabulary. Indeed, know this: he who goes out to collect wild herbs in a time of famine collects many things—even things which are not eaten—on account of his want. So perhaps we can say—since 'young plant [of the field]' and 'cucumbers of the field' are written—either that these things, which are called 'colocynths,' and from whose contents remedies are made, were an astringent and purgative medicine, or perhaps that these are those things which country people customarily call 'wild gourds.' But after all these things, I will say this: as to what is true here, I can by no means say.[368]

Jacob's friend, George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes, was also aware of the existence of different Biblical versions and the divergences among them and, he, too, had opinions as to which version was the most trustworthy. In a letter written to a recluse named

[368] Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), p. ܝܚ. ܬܘܒ ܫܐܠܬ܆ ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܡ ܐܬܐܡܪܘ̈ܢ ܦܩܘ̈ܥܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕ ܒܚܩܠܐ ܕܒ̈ܡܠܟܐ܆ ܕܒܠܥܘ ܕܠܩܛ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܒܢ̈ܝ ܢܒ̈ܝܐ ܘܐܪܡܝ ܒܩܕܪܐ. ܘܥܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܟܡܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܥ ܐܘ ܐܚܐ ܡܒܨܝܢܐ ܘܪܚܡ ܥܡܠܐ. ܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܝ ܡܫܟܚܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ ܠܡܦܣܩ ܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ ܕܐܝܕܐ ܗܝ ܒܗܬܐ. ܗܝ ܓܝܪ ܕܟܬܝܒܐ ܒܝܢ ܣܦܪ̈ܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ ܓܦܬܐ ܕܒܪܝܬܐ. ܫܪܘܪܐ ܕܚܩܠܐ ܟܬܝܒܐ ܠܘܬ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. ܘܚܠܦ ܦܐܪ̈ܐ. ܩܛ̈ܘܐ ܕܒܪܐ. ܘܚܠܦ ܗܝ ܕܢܦܩ ܠܡܠܩܛ ܝܪ̈ܘܩܐ. ܠܡܠܩܛ ܐܪܝܘܬ ܟܬܝܒܐ ܒܝܢ ܣܦܪ̈ܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. ܐܪܝܘܬ ܕܝܢ ܒܪܬ ܩܠܐ ܥܒܪܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܘܠܐ ܝܕܝܥܐ ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܝ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܩܪܘ ܠܗ̇ ܗܟܢܐ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܝܗܘܢ. ܕܡܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܡܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܬܬܕܡܪ ܕܐܡܪܬ܆ ܕܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܝ ܡܫܟܚܢܐ ܠܦܘܢܝܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܥܬܝܕܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܟܡܢ ܗܟܢ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܒܟܠܗ ܗܘܐ ܬܟܝܠ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܠܟ ܥܠ ܒܢ̈ܬ ܩܠܐ ܥܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ. ܗܕܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܥ ܕܢܦܩ ܕܢܠܩܛ ܝܪ̈ܘܩܐ ܕܒܪܐ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܕܟܦܢܐ. ܣܓܝ̈ܐܬܐ ܡܠܩܛ ܡܛܠ ܣܢܝܩܘܬܗ. ܘܐܦ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܐܟܠܢ. ܘܡܟܝܠ ܐܢܐ ܠܝ ܠܡܐܡܪ܆ ܡܛܠ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܫܪܘܪܐ ܘܩܛ̈ܘܐ ܕܚܩܠܐ. ܐܘ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܦܬ̈ܟܘܢܬܐ ܕܟܒ̈ܝܢ ܡܢ ܓܘܗܝܢ ܐܣ̈ܘܬܐ܆ ܐܝܟ ܣܡܐ ܚܝ ܥܨܝܐ ܘܡܕܒܚܢܐ ܐܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ܆ ܐܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܟܢ ܕܩܪ̈ܝܢ ܠܗܝܢ ܐܢܫܝ ܩܘܪ̈ܝܐ ܩܪ̈ܐ ܕܒܪܐ. ܒܬܪ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܕܗ̇ܝ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܦܘܪܣ ܠܝܬ ܠܝ ܠܡܐܡܪ܀ Some of the precise names of plants in this passage are obscure, which makes this text difficult to translate. In his FT, Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' pp. 269-270, also had difficulty with parts of this passage.

Joshua in AD 714, George takes up a number of issues which Joshua had raised relating to the *Demonstrations* of the fourth-century writer Aphrahat. One of these centered around the ages of several of the Patriarchs as reported by Aphrahat. The problem, George points out, is one of different Biblical versions:

> So, in the Demonstration 'On the Cluster of Grapes,' [Aphrahat] said that Noah lived until 58 years of the life of Abraham, who was in Ur of the Chaldeans and that it was there that he died and was buried. Furthermore, concerning Shem, he said that he lived until 52 years of the life of Jacob. Know, therefore, O lover of instruction, that this writer made all his calculations according to the tradition of the Jews and not according to the Septuagint translation or according to the tradition of the Samaritans, as you yourself wrote me before.

Once he has identified the source of the difficulty, George offers a clear prescription for its remedy:

> But as for you, cling to the tradition which is in accordance with the Septuagint and follow it, especially in the issue of the years of the chief of the Patriarchs, because learned writers bear witness that [the LXX version] is more true than these others. You should hold[369] that from Adam to the Flood, there were 2242 years, and from the Flood until Abraham, there are 943 years and from Adam until Abraham, there are 3185 years. From Abraham until Israel's Exodus from Egypt, there are 515 years, and from the Exodus until the beginning of the building of the Temple, there are 480 years, as it is written in the Book of Kings.[370] From the beginning of the building of the Temple until its burning by Nebuchadnezzar, there are 441 years. From the burning of the temple until the beginning of the Era of the Greeks, there are 280 years. In sum, therefore, from Adam until the Era of the Greeks, there are 4901 years and from Adam until this [present] year of the Greeks, 1025, there are 5926 years, there being 74 years lacking from 6,000.[371]

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[369] Lit., 'Cling and follow, holding that…'

[370] 1 Kings 6:1

[371] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 252b (7.4.10 in my edition): ܐܡܪ ܗܟܝܠ ܒܬܫܘܝܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܥܠ ܛܘܛܝܬܐ. ܕܢܘܚ ܚܝܐ ܒܫܢܝܐ ܠܥܠܬ ܢ̈ܚ ܫܢܝܢ ܠܚܝܘܗܝ ܕܐܒܪܗܡ. ܘܕܒܐܘܪ ܕܟܠܕܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ. ܘܕܬܡܢ ܡܝܬ ܘܐܬܩܒܪ܀ ܘܐܦ ܥܠ ܫܝܡ ܬܘܒ ܐܡܪ ܕܚܝܐ. ܒܫܢܝܐ ܠܥܠܬ ܢ̈ܒ ܫܢܝܢ ܠܚܝܘܗܝ ܕܝܥܩܘܒ+ ܕܥ ܡܕܝܢ ܐܘ ܪܚܡ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ. ܕܐܢܫ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܝܗܘ̈ܕܝܐ ܚܒܪ ܗܢܐ ܡܟܬܒܢܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܚܘܫ̈ܒܢܘܗܝ: ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܥ̈ܒ. ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܡܪ̈ܝܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܬ ܩܕܡܬ ܟܬܒܬ. ܐܢܬ ܕܝܢ ܠܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܐܝܟ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܥ̈ܒ ܩܦ ܘܠܗ ܫܠܡ: ܘܒܬܪܝܗ ܐܙܠ ܒܥܠܬܐ ܕܫܢ̈ܝܐ ܕܪܝܫ ܐܒܗ̈ܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܢܘ ܡܣܗܕܝܢ ܡܟ̈ܬܒܢܐ ܚܟ̈ܝܡܐ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ. ܟܕ ܐܚܝܕ ܐܢܬ ܕܡܢ ܐܕܡ ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܛܘܦܢܐ. ܫܢܝܢ ܒ̈ܣ ܪ̈ܡܒ. ܘܡܢ ܛܘܦܢܐ ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܐܒܪܗܡ. ܫܢܝܢ ܨ̈ܡܓ+ ܘܡܢ ܐܕܡ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܐܒܪܗܡ. ܫܢܝܢ ܓ̄ ܩ̈ܦܗ܀.. ܘܡܢ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܡܦܩܬܐ ܕܐܝܣܪܐܝܠ ܕܡܢ ܡܨܪܝܢ ܫܢܝܢ ܢ̈ܩܗ܀ ܘܡܢ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܫܘܪܝ ܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܗܝܟܠܐ. ܫܢܝܢ ܬ̈ܦ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܒܣܦܪ ܡ̈ܠܟܐ+ ܘܡܢ ܫܘܪܝ ܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܗܝܟܠܐ ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܝܩܕܢܗ ܕܡܢ ܢܒܘܟܕܢܨܪ. ܫܢܝܢ ܬ̈ܡܐ܀܀ ܘܡܢ ܝܩܕܢܐ ܕܗܝܟܠܐ

Apart from such explicit references to and discussions of different Biblical translations in Syriac authors, we have the physical evidence of Biblical manuscripts themselves whose margins were littered with variant readings from different versions—the late antique or early medieval equivalent of an apparatus criticus.[372] 'The margins are thickly covered with notes,' Wright wrote of a manuscript of the book of Syro-Hexplaric translation of the Psalms, copied in the first half of the eighth century, 'consisting chiefly of the various readings of Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, the Quinta and the Sexta...There are also many Greek words written on the margins in elegant slanting uncials...'[373] Wright's words could also serve as an accurate description of Ceriani's photolithographic edition of Milan ms C 313 Inf, a beautiful Estrangela copy of about half of the Syro-Hexapla from the late eighth or early ninth century, whose ample margins are eager to offer its readers variant readings, Greek words and quotations from the Fathers.[374] Indeed, the presence of abundant marginal variant readings is one of the hallmarks of Syro-Hexaplaric manuscripts. 'What catches the eye whenever one opens a codex of the Syro-Hexapla,' Arthur Vööbus wrote, 'is the margin.

ܘܒܡܕܡܐ ܠܥܒܪ, ܫ̈ܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܡܦ̈ܩܢܐ. ܫ̈ܘܚܠܦܐ ܐ̈ܪ ❖ ܗܟܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܒܡܕܡܐ ܠܥܒܪ, ܫ̈ܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܡܦ̈ܩܢܐ. ܘܗܘܝ ܫ̈ܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܪ̈ܐ ❖
ܘܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܘܒܡܕܡܐ ܠܗܘܢܐ ܥܒܕ ܐܬ̈ܬܗ ܕܡܦ̈ܩܢܐ. ܘܗܘܝ ܫ̈ܘܚܠܦܐ ܗܝ ܒ̈ܗ ܒܕ ܣܥܪ̈ܐ ܡܢ ܘ̄ ܐ̈ܠܦܝܢ : ܫ̈ܘܚܠܦܐ ܒ̈ܕ ❖

[372] After the Bible, the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen represent perhaps the most complex case of multiple translation in the Syriac tradition. BL Add. 12,153 provides an example of a ms. of the *Homilies* of Gregory which provided variant readings among the notes in the margins; see the comments of Wright in his *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 426: 'The margins of this manuscript are covered with notes, in the same handwriting as the text, which are probably due either to the translator Paul or to the patriarch Athanasius II. Many of them are either various readings...or references to Scripture; but others relate to the occasions of the sermons, or are explanatory of words or passages in them.'

[373] About BL Add., 14,434. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 35.

[374] See A.M. Ceriani, ed., *Codex Syro-Hexaplaris Ambrosianus Photolithographice editus* (*Monumenta sacra et Profana ex Codicibus Praesertim*, vol. 7) (Milan, 1874). Brock provides a useful summary of information about this ms. in *idem.*, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, pp. 47-48, which I have relied upon here.

> This is more or less thickly set with a textual critical apparatus. In every respect, the nature of the textual critical apparatus is outstanding. What is accumulated here is ... far more complete than can be found in any known Greek manuscript of the Hexaplaric text of the Septuagint. Numerous readings are given from Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion and in the Psalter also from the Quinta and the Sexta. In addition to this material, the margin is occasionally furnished with some scholia. Short introductions have also been prefixed to certain parts of the version. In many cases these were taken from the writings of various scholars.[375]

More than references to alternate Greek versions, Syro-Hexaplaric manuscripts would also contain variant readings from the Hebrew text and from the Samaritan Pentateuch.[376] George of the Arabs had been aware of the differing chronological schemes presented in the LXX, the Hebrew, and the Samaritan text of the OT. It does not require a particularly difficult stretch of the historical imagination to suppose he had access to a Syro-Hexaplaric manuscript which contained all these variant traditions in the rich forests of its margins. And collecting variant readings, of course, was not limited to Biblical manuscripts alone. Among the works Lazarus of Beth Qandasa (fl. ca. AD 774) has left us is a commentary on the Pauline Epistles.[377] Appended to the commentary is a note written by Lazarus's student, George of Beth Naqe, which discusses the meanings of various paratextual elements and symbols in the manuscript. 'I am in possession of another copy,' George writes in his note, 'which is

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[375] A. Vööbus, *The Hexapla and the Syro-Hexapla. Very important Discoveries for Septuagint Research* (Stockholm, 1971), p. 51.

[376] And other philological material as well. See A. Vööbus' discussion of the 'Textual-Critical Physiognomy' of a Midyat ms. containing the Syro-Hexaplaric Pentateuch in *idem*., *The Pentateuch in the version of the Syro-Hexapla. A fac-simile Edition of a Midyat MS. discovered 1964* (CSCO 369: Subsidia 45) (Louvain, 1975), pp. 37-39. For images of another Syro-Hexaplaric manuscript, see *idem*., *The Book of Isaiah in the Version of the Syro-Hexapla. A facsimile edition of MS. St. Mark 1 in Jerusalem with an Introduction* (CSCO 449: Subsidia 68) (Louvain, 1983), in which see pp. 23-27 for a discussion of the textual-critical sigla employed by the manuscript as well as the content of its margins.

[377] For Lazarus' *floruit*, see Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p.610, note. On Lazarus, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 271, and Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, pp. 162-163.

like this; and I have been helped by it, collecting other types [of readings] from it.'[378] The textual-critical material in the margins of Syro-Hexaplaric manuscripts or the collecting of variant readings by George of Beth Naqe represents the the same world of scholarly practices that we encounter in the marginalia of the Paris *Organon*.

The Syriac reader would encounter variations in the Biblical text from more than just the competing Biblical translations which existed: within the same Bible, there was the problem of New Testament citations of the Old which did not correspond to the OT text as it stood. Keen students of the Scriptures among the Christians no doubt discovered this both through their own personal study and also in polemical encounters with Jews. We can see such an awareness in Timothy I's *Letter 47*, which I have already referred to. In the second half of this remarkable document, Timothy reports that manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible had been recently discovered near Jericho—a reference to what are today known as the Dead Sea scrolls.

> We have learnt from certain Jews who are worthy of credence, who have recently been converted to Christianity, that ten years ago some books were discovered in the vicinity of Jericho, in a cave-dwelling in the mountain. They say that the dog of an Arab who was hunting game went into a cleft after an animal and did not come out; his owner then went in after him and found a chamber inside the mountain containing many books. The huntsman went to Jerusalem and reported this to some Jews. A lot of people set off and arrived there; they found books of the Old Testament, and, apart from that, other books in Hebrew script.[379]

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[378] BL Add., 14,683, Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p.612. ܐܬܦܓܥܬ ܠܝ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܡܢ ܚܕܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܗ̇ܘ ܗܟܘܬ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ܇ ܘܡܢܗ ܐܬܥܕܪܬ. ܟܕ: ܐܦ ܙܢ̈ܝܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܟܢܫܬ ܡܢܗ

[379] Translation S.P. Brock in *idem.*, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 248. For Syriac text, see Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos,' p. 304: ܝܠܦܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܐ̄ܢܫܝܢ ܡܗ̄ܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܥܡܕ̈ܝ ܠܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܐܠܝܢ ܕܗܫܐ ܚܕܬܐܝܬ ܐܬܬܠܡܕܘ ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ: ܕܡܢ ܫܢ̈ܝܐ ܥܣܪ ܐܫܬܟܚܘ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܒܡܥܪܬܐ ܕܐܝܪܝܚܘ ܒܛܘܪܐ ܒܡܬܐ ܚܕ. ܟܠܒܐ ܠܗ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܛܝܝܐ ܕܨܐܕ ܗ̄ܘܐ ܨܝܕܐ ܥܠ ܒܢܩܥܐ ܒܬܪ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܡܕܡ: ܘܠܐ ܢܦܩ. ܘܥܠ ܡܪܗ ܒܬܪܗ: ܘܐܫܟܚ ܒܝܬܘܢܐ ܒܓܘ ܛܘܪܐ ܘܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܒܗ. ܥܠ ܕܝܢ ܗ̇ܘ ܨܝܕܐ ܠܐܘܪܫܠܡ: ܘܐܘܕܥܗ̇ ܠܝܗ̄ܘܕܝܐ. ܘܢܦܩܘ ܠܗ ܣܘܓܐܐ ܘܐܙܠܘ. ܘܐܫܟܚܘ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܘܣܛܪ ܡܢܗ̇ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܥܒܪܝܐ.

For Timothy, the discovery of these new Old Testament manuscripts held out the exciting opportunity that copies of the OT which corresponded more faithfully to the Old Testament text which seems to be presumed by certain writers in the New.

> Because the person who told me this knows the script and is skilled in reading it, I asked him about certain verses adduced in our New Testament as being from the Old Testament, but of which there is no mention at all the Old Testament, neither among us Christians, nor among the Jews. He told me that they were to be found in the books that had been discovered there.[380]

There were a number of missing Old Testament passages that Timothy had in mind and which he was eager to find in the newly-discovered manuscripts. He had sent off a list of unaccounted-for verses which were to be looked for.

> When I heard this from that catechumen, I asked other people as well, besides him, and I discovered the same story without any difference. I wrote about the matter to the resplendent Gabriel, and also to Shubhalmaran, metropolitain of Damascus, in order that they might make investigation into these books and see if there is to be found in the prophets that 'seal', 'He will be called Nazarene' [Matt. 21:23], or 'That which eye has not seen and ear has not heard' [1 Cor. 2:9], or 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on the wood' [Gal. 3:13], or 'He turned back the boundary to Israel, in accordance with the word of the Lord which he spoke through Jonah the prophet from Gad Hfar,' and other passages like them which were adduced by the New Testament and the Old Testament but which are not to be found at all in the Bible we possess. I further asked him, if they found these phrases in those books, by all means to translate them. For it is written in the Psalm beginning 'Have mercy, O God, according to your grace' [Ps. 51], 'Sprinkle upon me with the hyssop of the blood of your cross and cleanse me.' This phrase is not in the Septuagint, nor in the other versions, nor in the Hebrew. Now that Hebrew man told me, 'We found a David [i.e. a Psalter] among those books, containing more than two hundred psalms.' I wrote concerning all this to them. ... If any of these phrases are to be found in the aforementioned books it will be evident that they are more reliable than the texts in currency among the Hebrews and among us. Although I wrote, I have received no answer from them on this matter. I have not got anyone

[380] Translation S.P. Brock in *idem.*, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, pp. 248-249. For the Syriac text, see Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos,' pp. 304, 306. ܘܡܛܠ ܕܝܕܥ ܣܦܪܐ ܘܡܦܩܪܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܗ̄ܘܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܝ: ܫܐܠܬܗ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܦܬ̈ܓܡܐ: ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܐܬܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܕܝܬܩܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܚܕܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ: ܠܥܬܝܩܬܗ، ܕܝܢ ܠܓܡܪ ܕܘܟܪܢܗܘܢ ܒܕܝܬܩܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܓܒ ܐܢܫ ܕܝܠܢ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܓܒ ܐܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܗܘ̈ܕܝܐ. ܘܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܕܐܝܬ ܘܡܫܟܚܢ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܐܫܬܟܚܘ ܬܡܢ.

sufficiently capable with me whom I can send. The matter has been like a burning fire in my heart and it has set my bones alight.[381]

There was also the existence of translated Greek patristic texts whose embedded Biblical citations might differ from the same passage as translated in the Syriac Bible. At some point in the late fifth or early sixth century, Gregory of Nyssa's *Commentary* on the Song of Songs was translated into Syriac.[382] Two letters were inserted as prefaces to the translation: the first requested that the translation be made and the second was written as an 'apologia' for the work once it had been translated. The translator, who never gives his name, was keenly aware of the differences in Greek and Syriac translations of the OT. In his translation, he had chosen to render the Biblical text of the Song of Songs directly from the Greek of Gregory's *Commentary* and not insert its Syriac equivalent; he had done the same for other Biblical citations in the *Commentary* and was worried about the disturbance the discrepancy between the Biblical text as cited in his translation and the standard Syriac text of the Bible might cause in his reader, so he addressed this problem directly in his letter. 'But now I ask of your love that your mind not be disturbed or troubled,' he wrote,

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[381] Translation S.P. Brock in *idem.*, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, pp. 248, 249. For the Syriac text, see Braun, 'Ein Brief des Katholikos Timotheos,' pp. 306, 308. ܘܒܗ ܗܕܐ ܫܥܬܐ ܡܢ ܬܠܡܝܕܐ ܗ̇ܘ: ܘܡܫܐܠܬ݂ ܘܐܦ ܠܐܚ̈ܪܢܐ ܦܫܩ ܡܢܗ: ܘܗ̇ܝ ܕܒܗ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܐܬܡܫܬܥܝܬ ܕܠܐ ܫܘܠܦܐ ܐܡܫܚܬ: ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܒܝ ܚܣܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ: ܘܐܦ ܠܐܘܒܣܘܢܪ ܡܛܪܦܘܠܝܛܐ ܕܕܪܡܣܘܩ. ܐܡܟܢܐ ܕܢܫܟܚܘܢ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗܠܝܢ. ܘܢܣܒܘܢ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܕܘܟ ܒܒܥܬܐ ܠܦܢܝܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܢܣܒ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܦܩܐ. ܐܘ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܒܥܐ ܠܗ ܣܓܝ ܘܐܕܝܢܐ ܠܗ ܡܫܒܚܐ: ܐܘ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܠܡܦܩ ܗ̈ܘ ܕܬܬܬܠܐ ܒܡܫܡܥܐ: ܐܘ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܗܘܝ ܐܬܦܩܚ ܬܫܒ̈ܚܬܐ ܠܡܫܪܠ: ܐܝܟ ܦܬ ܟܬܒܗ ܕܪܒܢܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܒܝܕ ܡܘܫܐ ܢܒܝܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܒܪ ܣܦܪ: ܘܐܫܬܐܠܬܐ ܕܐܒܘܬܗܘܢ: ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܬܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܘܥܬܝܩܬܐ. ܠܘܬ ܐܢܫ ܕܝܢ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܗ̇ܘ ܡܢܐ ܕܐܫܟܚܝܢ ܘܒܟܬܒܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܫܒܚ ܦܬ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ: ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܐܚܢܐ ܢܦܫܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ. ܒܠܐܟ ܒܪ ܒܪܫܡ ܒܠܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܠܡܦܬܟ: ܪܘܬ ܠܡ ܒܠܝ ܒܘܦܐ ܕܕܘܝܗ ܕܐܦܣܝܩ. ܘܕܒܪ. ܘܠܬܠܬܗܘܢ ܗܢܐ ܦܬ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܒܡܟܬܒ: ܘܠܐ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܐ̄ܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܟܬܒܢܐ. ܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܕܝܢ ܗ̇ܘ ܟܬܒܢܐ. ܕܐܫܟܚܝܢ ܠܕܘܝܕ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ: ܢܛܪ ܡܢ ܡܟܬܒ ܡܘܕܥܝܢ. ܘܟܠܟܠ ܡܢ ܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܝ̣ ܕ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ.... ܘܐܢ ܗ̤ܘ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܦܬ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܥܒܝܫ: ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܐܬܐܡܪܘ: ܢܕܟܐ ܕܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܥܒܪ̈ܝܐ ܡܬܪ ܐܘ ܒܢܝ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܬܟ ܒܪܒܝܐ ܘܠܘܬܟ. ܐܠܐ ܟܘܠܟܠ ܡܢ ܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܬܬܐ ܒܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ. ܘܠܐ ܠܝܬ ܠܝ ܐ̄ܢܫ ܕܦܝܫ ܕܡܫܕܪ ܐܢܐ. ܘܗܘܬ ܗܕܐ ܒܠܒܝ ܐܝܟ ܢܘܪܐ ܝܩܕܐ ܘܫܠܗܒܐ ܒܓܪ̈ܡܝ.

[382] For this date, see C. van den Eynde, *La version syriaque du commentaire de Grégoire de Nysse sur le cantique des cantiques: ses origines, ses témoins, son influence* (Louvain, 1939), p. 64.

> when, once we have entered the translation, you find that the arrangement of the words of this book differs from the arrangement of those words which are set down in the Syriac book [of the Song of Songs]. For the translation—neither of this book, nor of the rest of the Holy Scriptures—which was from the Hebrew to the Greek does not agree with that which was from the Hebrew to Aramaic. Instead, the form and arrangement differ, noun-for-noun and verb-for-verb, in many places because there are words or nouns in the Hebrew language that correspond to two meanings, or perhaps even three. On account of this, when the Greeks were translating, it was necessary for them to set down a noun or a word in one form and for the Syrians to set it down in another form, which differs—as is the case with the word which is written at the beginning of this book: the Greek and the Aramaic translate it differently.

One did not need to go beyond the second verse of the Song of Songs to find an example of the Greek and Syriac versions differing:

> For, 'may he kiss me,' differs from 'he has kissed me.'[383] In the Aramaic, the Bride speaks of something that has already happened—'he has kissed me with the kisses of his mouth.' In the Greek, however, she asks for something which has not yet happened to her—'may he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.'

The dilemma which confronted the translator was a rather basic one: Gregory spoke Greek and used the Greek Bible as the basis for his work; trying to make the words of Gregory's analysis apply to the text of the Syriac Bible, especially when it differed, would result in confusion.

> Therefore, the Blessed Gregory agrees with this meaning in his commentary, seeing that he was a Greek and exegeted from the Greek. But as for us, if we had subsequently written down this word as it is stated in the Syriac, we would have corrupted the order of the commentary in that it would have been a word foreign to his exegesis.

Verse three of the first chapter of the *Song of Songs* provided yet another example of diverging translations and offered the translator of the *Commentary* more grist for discussion:

> To give another example, a little bit later, it is stated in the book, 'Your name is the oil of myrrh (μύρρα), for this reason, maidens have loved you.'[384] The Greek,

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[383] Song of Songs, 1:2

[384] Song of Songs, 1:3

> however, does not translate it this way, but rather in the following manner: 'Your name is a clear oil (μύρον), for this reason, maidens have loved you.' It was not possible that we set it down as it is in the Syriac, lest, as I have said above, it fit strangely in the words of his commentary since the commentator of necessity follows the Greek text. On account of this, we have set it down as it was phrased in the Greek. However, because this noun 'oil' (μύρον) is Greek and is unknown to all Syrians, we had to write it down according to what it does, and for this reason, we wrote it in the following way: 'Your name is a pleasant and clear oil.' (μύρον is an oil which is compounded with many different spices which dissolve in it and it then comes to have this name—like nard and glaucium.)

Such was the nature of the differences between the Syriac and Greek texts of the *Song of Songs*, and indeed, the entire OT, that the translator could have continued to multiply examples, but for the sake of his reader, chose not to. 'Lest I wear you out with many examples,' he went on

> I suppose that these things will suffice to convince you that so that your eyes will not be confused at the difference in words which you will discover have not been set down as in the Syriac. Indeed, we have not done this only with the words of this book of the Song of Songs, but also with the rest of the wording with the other books of Scripture which the exegete cites as witnesses for his argument, for in all the Holy Scriptures there is this difference from place to place between the Syriac and the Greek.[385]

[385] C. van den Eynde, *La version syriaque du commentaire de Grégoire de Nysse sur le cantique des cantiques: ses origines, ses témoins, son influence* (Louvain, 1939), pp. 73-75: ܬܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܡܢ ܣܘܟܠܗ. ܕܠܐ ܢܬܕܘܕ ܪܥܝܢܟ ܐܘ ܢܬܚܒܠ. ܟܕ ܬܫܟܚ ܕܡܫܬܚܠܦ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܦܬܓܡܘܗܝ، ܕܗܠܝܢ ܗܟܢܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܡܢ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܫܟܚ ܒܗ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܩܘܪܝܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܓܝܪ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܥܠ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܣܘܟܠܐ. ܠܐ ܕܝܢܐ ܒܡܠܬܐ. ܐܦ ܠܐ ܕܥܒܕܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܗܕܐ ܕܗܘܬ ܡܢ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܠܗ، ܕܗܘܬ ܡܢ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܠܝܘܢܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦ ܗܘ ܐܫܟܚܬܐ ܘܦܬܓܡܐ ܕܡܠܝܢ ܡܠܝܢ. ܘܕܫܟܚܢ ܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܣܝܡܐ. ܡܛܠ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܦܬ ܓܒܬܐ ܐܘ ܫܟܚܐ ܐܘ ܫܟܚܐ ܠܥܒܕܐ ܒܥܒܕܐ. ܘܐܬ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܡܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܠܐ ܘܥܡܐ ܡܩܒܠ: ܘܒܝܬ ܟܬܒܐ ܐܦ ܠܬܠܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܠܝܨ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܡܦܩܢ. ܒܐܘܡܢܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܢܫܡܘܗܝ، ܠܫܡܐ ܐܘ ܠܦܬ ܓܒܬܐ. ܘܗܘܪܝܐ ܬܘܒ ܒܐܘܡܢܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܡܫܬܠܚ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܫܡܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܨܒ ܒܗܘܢܝܗ ܕܠܗ ܗܢܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ. ܐܫܟܚܬ ܓܝܪ ܐܦܘܗ ܢܘܢܐ ܘܐܫܟܚܬ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ. ܡܫܬܠܚ ܗܘ، ܓܝܪ ܗܝ، ܕܡܬܚܫܒ ܡܢ ܗܝ، ܕܢܫܒܚ. ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܐܘܪܝܬܐ ܓܝܪ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܢ ܒܪܘ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܐܡܪܐ ܟܠܬܐ. ܢܫܒܚ ܠܟ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܒܥܩܒܬܐ ܕܦܘܡܗ. ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܢܘܢܐ ܕܝܢ. ܗܘ ܡܕܡ ܕܒܟܒܠ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܫܟܠܐ ܕܢܫܘܐ ܠܗ. ܢܫܒܚ ܠܟ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܒܥܩܒܬܐ ܕܦܘܡܗ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܠܗ ܠܗ ܠܗܢܐ ܚܠܦܐ ܕܠܗ ܕܫܡܐ ܫܠܡ ܠܦܬܓܡܐ ܓܒܪܘܗܝ ܒܦܘܫܩܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܘܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܡܢ ܢܘܢܐ ܦܫܩ. ܐܦ ܚܢ ܡܚܝܠ ܐܠܘ ܡܫܝܚܘ، ܠܗܢܐ ܦܬ ܓܒܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܢ ܒܡܘܪܝܢ. ܡܫܒܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܠܐܫܬܘܬܐ ܕܠܗ ܕܦܘܫܩܐ ܒܗ، ܕܗܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܒܪ، ܦܬ ܓܒܬܐ ܠܦܘܫܩܗ. ܬܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܡܠܠ ܐܡܪ ܒܗ ܒܡܠܬܐ. ܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܘܪܐ ܫܡܟ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܥܠܝܡܬܐ ܪܚܡܟ. ܢܘܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܦܫܗ. ܐܠܐ ܡܘܪܐ. ܡܘܪܘܢ ܡܫܘܫܐ ܫܡܟ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܥܠܝܡܬܐ ܪܚܡܟ. ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܝ ܗܘܬ ܕܢܫܝܡܝܗ، ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܕܠܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ. ܬܬܚܙܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܢܘܟܪܝܐ ܒܡܠ ܦܘܫܩܗ. ܒܗ، ܕܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܐܠܨܐܝܬ ܒܬܪ ܢܘܢܐ ܐܙܠ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܦ ܚܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܒܢܘܢܐ ܫܡܢܗܝ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܡܘܪܘܢ ܢܘܢܐ ܗܘ: ܘܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܠܐ

The problem, the translator recognized, was not just one of differences between the Syriac and the Greek; there were also differences between the various Greek versions of the Old Testament. 'As for all these translations,' he wrote,

> despite the fact that they are all translated into one language, they differ from one another in many words and expressions, because each one of the translators translated into Greek according to what he was able to understand from the word or expression which he found in the Hebrew, as in the case of this word '*rephaim*' [Is. 26:14]. For in the case of this word, in the Hebrew language it is sometimes understood to mean 'doctors' and sometimes understood to mean 'mighty men.' Though the [Hebrew] word does not change, it is reflected with different [Greek] words. For this reason, there are some translators who render it 'doctors' and some who render it 'mighty men.' And we find many words in this manner [τάξις].[386]

The preface to Gregory's *Commentary* along with the comments of Moses of Aggel, as well as the perplexed questions of Jacob and George's correspondents show that beginning in at least the early sixth century, the differing versions of the Bible and of Biblical citations was causing bewilderment and confusion among readers of Syriac Christian literature. The proliferation of Biblical and other translations in Syriac meant

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ܐܝܕܝܢ. ܐܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܕܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܗܝ، ܡܢ ܦܘܫܩܢܗ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܦܫܝܩܝܢ، ܗܟܢܐ. ܡܥܝܢܐ ܡܫܡܥܬܐ ܡܫܡܫܬܐ ܫܡܝܢ.
ܡܦܘܪ ܓܝܪ ܡܫܡܥܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܗܘ̈ܦܟܐ ܦ̈ܘܠܓܐ ܘܡܫܚܠܦܐ ܕܒܠܝܫ ܒܗ ܡܬܠܬܕܢ ܘܐܬܬܐ ܠܫܡܐ ܗܢܐ.
ܐܟܘܬܐ ܕܢܘܪ ܘ ܟܠܗܘܡܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܐܠܐܦܢ ܒܩ̈ܠܝܬܐ. ܣܦܩ ܐܬܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܕܢܐ ܐܝܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܦܫܝܩܢ. ܕܠܐ
ܢܦܩ ܠܟܠܐ ܒܟܬܒܝܢ ܫܘܠܦܐ ܕܦܬ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܡܫܡܫ ܐܢܬ ܕܠܐ ܫܘܚܠܦ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܘܦܝܐ. ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܗܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ
ܟܠܫܘܕ ܒܦܬ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܒܟܬܒܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܒܡܪܟܐ ܕܦܬ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܟܬ̈ܒܐ
ܐܣܛܪܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܗܘܐ ܗ̇ܘ ܡܫܡܥܢܐ ܠܗܘܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܟܠܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܬ̈ܠܬܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܐܬܘܬܗ،
ܗܘܢܐ ܥܘܣܠܦܐ ܒܕܘܟܝܬܐ ܕܒܟܬܒܐ ܒܢܦ ܢܘܢܐ ܠܦܘܪܢܝܐ. cf. S.P. Brock, 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique,' p. 9, n. 15 and D. King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria*, p. 17. I am grateful to Yossi Witztum for help with this translation.

[386] van den Eynde, *La version syriaque du commentaire de Grégoire de Nysse*, pp. 75-76: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ
ܟܠܗܘܢ ܦܘܫܩ̈ܐ: ܟܕ ܠܘܬ ܚܕ ܠܫܢܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܢܦܩܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܒܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܘܒܦܬ ܡܠ̈ܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܡܫܚܠܦܝܢ ܡܢ
ܚ̈ܕܕܐ. ܒܕܘܟܬܗ ܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܐܝܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܨܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܫܬܟܠ ܡܢ ܫܡܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܦܬ ܡܠܬܐ
ܕܡܫܟܚ ܗܘܐ ܒܥܒܪ̈ܝܐ. ܡܦܩ ܗܘܐ ܠܝܘܢܝܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܫܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܪ̈ܦܐܝܡ. ܗܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܫܡܐ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ.
ܙܒܢ ܡܫܬܡܥ ܥܠ ܐܣܘ̈ܬܐ. ܘܙܒܢ ܥܠ ܓܢܒܪ̈ܐ. ܘܟܕ ܗ̇ܘ ܫܡܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦ. ܥܠ ܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܡܫܚܠܦܐ ܡܬܕܪܟ.
ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܦܩܢ̈ܐ. ܕܡܦܩܝܢܗ̇، ܐܣܘ̈ܬܐ، ܘܐܝܬ ܕܡܦܩܝܢܗ̇، ܓܢܒܪ̈ܐ. ܘܡܫܟܚܝܢܢ ܒܗ ܒܗܢܐ
ܠܛܟܣܐ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܐܦ ܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ. See *ibid*., pp. 101-102 for LT and n. 24, which points out that at Isaiah 26:14, the LXX renders רְפָאִים as ἰατροί, Symmachus translates it γίγαντες and Aquila gives ῥαφαΐν. The Vulgate here reads 'gigantes.'

that it was not uncommon for readers in the Syriac-speaking world to confront the phenomenon of different translations and to have to try to make sense of their existence. The distance from an awareness of a variety of translations, to evaluating the relative quality of those translations is not a far one. Here, we are knocking on the door of the *Risāla*.

Everyone's a Critic: Dissatisfaction with Previous Translations

Undertaking the new translation of a text implies some sort of dissatisfaction with whatever translation is already in existence and the sheer abundance of revisions and re-translations of Greek texts in Syriac suggests that there was plenty of dissatisfaction to go around in the world of Syriac scholarship. This is more than just a supposition, too—we possess explicit criticisms of previous translations from the pens of Syriac scholars. It is in this context and tradition that we should understand Ḥunayn and the Paris *Organon*'s critiques of previous translations.

One of the motors driving the constant revision and retranslation of Syriac Biblical texts was theological controversy and the need for more precise renderings of the Greek text to employ polemically against theological adversaries. This was the setting in which Philoxenos of Mabbug (d. ca. 523) commissioned his chorepiscopos Polycarp to make a revision of the Peshitta New Testament in 507/8 AD. In his *Commentary on the Prologue of John*, Philoxenos, writing over three centuries before the *Risāla* was composed, explains his reasons for commissioning a revision to the existing Peshitta text:

> When those of old undertook to translate these [passages of the] scriptures they made mistakes in many things, whether intentionally or through ignorance. These mistakes concerned not only what is taught about the Economy in the flesh, but various other things concerning different matters. It was for this

reason that we now have taken the trouble to have the Holy Scriptures translated anew from the Greek.[387]

Philoxenos was particularly concerned about several NT passages which might be used to support a Nestorian Christological stance. Matthew 1:1 and Matthew 1:18 were two such passages:

> Concerning now those things which are known to be set down in the Syriac [sc. the Peshitta]: 'the Book of the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,' and also, 'As for the the nativity of Jesus Christ, it happened in this way.' In the Greek, from which it is well-known that the books of the NT were translated, this is not what was written; rather, instead of 'nativity,' both passages have 'becoming'; nevertheless, the person who translated it for some reason unknown to me preferred to translate by 'birth' and 'nativity' instead of 'becoming.'[388]

Another translation that Philoxenos took issue with was Hebrews 10:5:

> Again, the passage 'you have established me with a body'—indicating the inhomination by means of which the Son fulfilled the Father's will and became a sacrifice on behalf of all—was translated by them as 'you clothed me with a body'. Thus it can be everywhere recognized that they have not translated the Apostle, but introduced their own opinion into the renderings.[389]

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[387] Translation S.P. Brock in 'The Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' p. 328 in *New Testament Textual Criticism: Its Significance for Exegesis. Essays in Honor of Bruce M. Metzger*, edd. E.J. Epp and G.D. Fee (Oxford, 1981). Syriac text in A. de Halleux, ed. *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique (Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,534)* (CSCO 380: SS 165) (Louvain, 1977), p. 53 ...ܘܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܢ ܡܕܡ ܦܫܝܩ ܒܡܠܬܐ: ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܒܗܘܢ ܘܐܝܟ ܗܢ ܠܐ ܡܬܒܥܝܐ܆ [ܣܝܡ] ܒܦܚܡܐܝܬܐ. ܠܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܠܟ ܒܠ ܡܬܪܓܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܟܬܒܐ܆ ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܒܪܐ ܕܒܠܝܗܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕ̈ܪܘܚܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ. ܘܒܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܠܢ ܗܘܐ ܗܫܐ ܥܡܠܝܢܢ܆ ܕܢܬܦܫܩ ܡܢ ܕܪܝܫ ܢܬܦܫܩܘܢ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ: ܟܬܒܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܕܕܝܬܝܩܐ ܚܕܬܐ.

[388] Translation from 'In the Greek' to the end of the quote, from Brock, 'Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' p. 328. The first part of the translation is mine. Syriac text in *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique*, p. 42: ܡܛܠ ܕܗ̈ܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܝܕܥܢ ܕܣܝ̈ܡܢ ܗܟܢܐ ܒܣܘܪܝܝܐ: ܟܬܒܐ ܕܝܠܝܕܘܬܗ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܗ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܒܪܗܡ: ܘܬܘܒ ܕܝܠܝܕܘܬܗ ܕܝܢ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܗܘܐ܆ ܒܝܘܢܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܢܗ ܐܬܝܕܥ ܕܐܬܦܫܩܘ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܕܝܬܝܩܐ ܚܕܬܐ܆ ܠܘ ܗܟܢܐ ܟܬܝܒ. ܐܠܐ ܚܠܦ ܝܠܕܐ ܗܘܝܐ ܣܝܡ ܒܟܠ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܦܣܘ̈ܩܝܢ܆ ܘܐܦ ܠܗܘ ܕܦܫܩ ܠܗ ܡܛܠ ܐܝܕܐ ܥܠܬܐ ܝܕܝܥܐ: ܐܬܪܥܝ ܕܢܦܫܘܩ ܝܠܕܐ ܘܝܠܕܘܬܐ ܚܠܦ ܗܘܝܐ

[389] Translation Brock, 'Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' p. 329. Syriac text in *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique*, pp. 53-54: ܘܬܘܒ ܗܝ܆ ܕܐܬܩܢ ܒܪܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܒܐ: ܕܦܓܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܬܩܢܬ ܠܝ. ܗܢ ܕܗܘܐ ܥܠ ܡܬܒܪܢܫܢܘܬܐ: ܗܝ ܕܒܐܝܕܗ̇ ܫܡܠܝ ܨܒܝܢܗ ܕܐܒܐ: ܘܗܘܐ ܕܒܚܐ ܚܠܦ ܟܠ. ܗܦܟܘ ܐܦ ܠܗܕܐ܆ ܕܦܓܪܐ ܠܒܫܬܢܝ ܦܫܩܘܗ̇. ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܢܬܝܕܥܘܢ܆ ܕܠܘ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܦܫܩܘ ܦܫܩܘ܆ ܐܠܐ ܡܚ̈ܫܒܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܣܡܘ ܒܡܦ̈ܫܩܢܘܬܗܘܢ

Philoxenos' displeasure with faulty renderings could lead him to explicitly chastise the translators of the Peshitta and reproach them even as he was reproaching heretics. 'One should not,' he writes,

> consider that we have here unnecessarily prolonged our discussion concerning this matter. It has been, rather, because we seek—in addition to censuring the one who translates, since going beyond the truth of that which is written, he has set down words which he considered appropriate for the Syriac language or which he thought were proper to God, as if he knows that which is greater than him, that these things are fitting for Him—to rebuke the ignorance of the heretics who accept, only just, this point that God was born of a woman [Galatians 4:4], but who now refuse [to accept] the statement [about] 'becoming' [John 1:14]. They say that it is not proper that 'becoming' be said of God, so that it is not therefore the thing which the Scripture teaches that they find themselves accepting about God, but only what seems good to them.[390]

In fact, Philoxenos's assessment of the translation of the Peshitta could be much harsher than that of Ḥunayn or the Paris *Organon* towards preceding translations. The latter two might only suggest that the translations were of a low quality or the translators did not have a sufficient knowledge of Greek. Philoxenos, on the other hand, would go beyond judgements of the translators' knowledge to ones about their moral status.

> But if those who translated [the Peshitta] thought this, namely, that it was not good that 'the becoming of Christ' be set down in the Syriac language, or '[the becoming] of God,' or '[the becoming] of the Son,' they should have known that it is not appropriate for the one who is concerned to translate the truth to choose which of these words is suitable for each one of the languages [sc. Greek and Syriac]. Instead, [he should be concerned with] seeking out which ones are the phrases and words which were spoken by God or by His Spirit through the Prophets and Apostles, for these things which are set down in the Holy

[390] Syriac text in *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique*, pp. 46-47: ܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܦܐܐ ܕܐܢܫ ܢܣܒܪ. ܕܒܕ ܠܐ ܐܠܨܐ ܐܘܪܟܢ ܬܢܢ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܗܢܐ ܫܪܒܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܒܥܝܢ܆ ܕܥܡ ܗܝ ܕܢܟܣ ܠܗܘ ܕܦܫܩ܆ ܕܥܒܪ ܡܢ ܫܪܪܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܟܬܝܒ܆ ܣܡ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܐܣܒܪ ܕܠܝܩܢ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ: ܐܘ ܕܙܕܩܢ ܕܦܐܝܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ: ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܝܕܥ ܡܢܗ ܗܘ ܕܝܬܝܪ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܦܐܝܢ ܠܗ܆ ܢܟܣܐ ܐܦ ܠܠܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܗܪ̈ܣܝܘܛܐ ܕܡܩܒܠܝܢ ܕܡܚܠܐ ܐܦ ܠܚܣܝܡ ܗܕܐ ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ. ܘܡܬܟܬܫܝܢ ܗܫܐ ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܗܘܝܐ. ܘܐܡܪܝܢ. ܕܠܐ ܦܐܝܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘܝܐ ܬܬܐܡܪ. ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܗܘ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܠܦ ܟܬܒܐ ܢܫܬܟܚܘܢ ܕܡܩܒܠܝܢ ܥܠ ܐܠܗܐ܆ ܐܠܐ ܗܝ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܫܦܪܐ FT in in A. de Halleux, trans. *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique (Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,534)* (CSCO 381: SS 166), p. 46.

Scriptures are not the offspring of human thoughts that they might receive revision or emendation. With respect to the Greeks: each one of these passages or words which we have mentioned was stated by the Evangelists or by the Apostle was set down just as has been stated by us—'Became from the seed of David in the flesh,' [Romans 1:3] and not 'was born in the flesh,' and also, 'The book of the becoming of Jesus Christ,' [Matthew 1:1] as well as 'As for Jesus Christ, his becoming happened in this way,' [Matthew 1:18]. Because the books of the New Testament were spoken in their language, they should all the more agree with these things which were written down among them, and not to what has been translated by some person or another and which which are of his opinion and not of the teaching of the Spirit. Everyone who changes or translates differently sentences and words which have been spoken by the Spirit is therefore not only blameworthy and deplorable but also wicked and a blasphemer and an associate of Marcionites and Manichaeans, who themselves removed from the Scriptures those things which have been spoken by God and also made changes and set down other things which seemed good to them. When Theodore and Nestorios—who are the leaders of the heresy of human worship—had fallen into this, they had the temerity to change some passages in the Scriptures and to translate others in a contrary way.[391]

Philoxenos took issue with other translations of the Greek of the New Testament present in the Peshitta[392] despite the fact that his own knowledge of Greek may have

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[391] *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique*, pp. 51-52: ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܗܘܕܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܦܫܩܘ: ܕܠܐ ܥܒܕܐ ܕܡܬܚܫܒܢ ܒܠܒܢܐ ܗܘܢܝܐ ܗܘܘ ܕܡܬܚܫܒܢܐ. ܐܘ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܐܘ ܕܒܢܝܐ: ܕܕܫ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܡܒܕ ܀ ܕܠܘ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܬܠܬܐ ܠܫܢܝ ܠܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ: ܘܠܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܠܗܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܥܙܙܐ ܢܫܡ. ܐܠܐ ܠܡܒܝܢܐ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܦܘܠ ܒܟܠܐ ܘܡܠܟܘܬܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗ: ܒܪ ܢܫܐ ܘܥܠܝܡܐ ܐܬܡܠܠ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܘ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܡܘܬܒܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܬܝ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܠܝܐ: ܕܟܕ ܡܚܘܬܐ ܐܢܫܐ ܢܡܠܠ ܬܘܪܝ ܐܘ ܐܦ ܬܘܩܢܐ. ܠܗܬ ܕܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ: ܟܠ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܬܠܬܐ ܘܡܠܬܐ ܕܐܬܥܗܕܢ ܕܐܬܐܡܪ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܣܛܐ ܘܡܢ ܫܠܝܚܐ: ܗܟܢܐ ܣܝܡܢ ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܐܬܐܡܪ ܡܢ. ܕܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܙܪܥܐ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܒܒܣܪ ܀ ܘܠܐ ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܒܒܣܪ. ܘܬܘܒ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܗܘܝܐ ܕܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܕܝܫܘܥ ܗܘܝܗ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܡܛܠ ܕܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܐܬܡܠܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܕܝܬܩܐ ܚܕܬܐ: ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܟܬܒܢ ܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܠܡܫܘܝܘ: ܘܠܐ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܚܕ ܕܗܘ ܐܬܦܫܩ: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܕܣܒܪܬܗ ܕܝܠܗ: ܘܠܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܗ ܕܪܘܚܐ ܀ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܡܕܝܢ ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܡܫܚܠܦ: ܐܘ ܕܡܦܫܩ ܐܚܪܢܐܝܬ ܬܠܬܐ ܘܡܠܬܐ ܕܐܬܡܠܠ ܡܢ ܪܘܚܐ: ܠܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܪ ܥܕܠܐ ܘܡܕܘܝܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܪܫܝܥܐ ܘܡܓܕܦܢܐ. ܘܫܘܬܦܐ ܕܡܪܩܝܘܢܐ ܘܕܡܢܝܚܝܐ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܐܪܝܡܘ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܡܠܠ: ܘܫܚܠܦܘ ܘܣܡܘ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܐܫܬܦܪ ܕܢܫܝܡܢ: ܕܒܗܝܢ ܗܢܐ ܟܕ ܢܦܠܘ ܐܦ ܬܐܕܘܪܘܣ ܘܢܣܛܘܪܝܘܣ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܪܫܝ ܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܦܠܚܝ ܒܪܢܫܐ: ܡܡܪܚܘ ܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܢܫܚܠܦܘܢ ܬܠܬܐ ܕܒܟܬܒܐ ܠܡܫܚܠܦܘ܀ ܘܠܡܦܫܩ ܠܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܕܠܘܩܒܠܐ. FT in A. de Halleu, trans. *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique* (CSCO 381: SS 166), pp. 51-52.

[392] See the other passage cited by Brock, 'Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' p. 329. See also, e.g., *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique*, p. 51, 'It merits pointing out that the Apostle here [cf. Romans 1:3] said, 'became' and not 'was born in the flesh,' as it pleased the ancients [sc. Peshitta translators] who translated from the Greek to render. They gave the ability to the heretics to understand "another who was born in another."' ܘܫܦܝܪ ܕܗܘܐ ܐܡܪ ܬܢܢ ܐܦ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܒܒܣܪ. ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܠܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܐܦܩܘ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܫܦܪ ܠܡܦܫܩܘ. ܘܝܗܒܘ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܠܗܪܛܝܩܘ ܠܡܣܬܟܠܘ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܐܬܝܠܕ ܒܐܚܪܢܐ

perhaps been less than perfect.[393] His critical remarks about translators were moreover not solely limited to the *Commentary on the Prologue of John*. In his *Letter to the Monks of Senoun* Philoxenos also voices complaints about the way Syriac Bible translators have handled words with important Christological implications. 'But,' he writes

> as for those who in every age have translated the Scriptures from the Greek language to the Syriac, being careful to preserve neither the precision of the aforementioned terms among the Greeks nor the truth of the doctrine, they have spoken falsely and written down what seems good to them or the expression which they supposed was customary in the Syriac language. They did not understand that if, along with the phrase, 'He became flesh,' which was translated into Syriac, these other expressions had been translated, they would have become customary usage with everyone and no one would have been caused to stumble at them. But I think that they perhaps thought that it was fitting for Syriac that it forever remain impoverished and that it not move forward by means of the increase of knowledge.[394]

Philoxenos appeals here to a notion of linguistic and translational progress—translations could be made precise and more accurate and a language could be rendered a more supple medium for conveying important nuance and shades of meaning. Centuries before Ḥunayn would criticize previous translators for the quality of their renderings and before he would speak of himself as having made poorer translations in his youth, we have here a Syriac-speaking scholar articulating ideas of

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[393] Note his confusion between γένεσις and γέννησις in *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique*, p. 43,: 'The reason which made the one who translated to set down 'nativity' rather than 'becoming' is either that perhaps the reading of the nouns for 'becoming' and 'nativity' in the Greek language resemble one another, for two *nūn*s are written in the noun for 'becoming,' one after another, but in 'nativity' there is only one…' ܥܠܬܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܥܒܕܬ ܠܗܘ ܕܦܫܩ ܕܢܣܝܡ ܡܘܠܕܐ ܚܠܦ ܗܘܝܐ ܐܘ ܕܠܡܐ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܚܕ ܠܚܕ: ܕܒܫܡܐ ܕܗܘܝܐ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܢܘܢ̈ ܟܬܝܒܢ ܚܕܐ ܒܬܪ ܚܕܐ: ܒܡܘܠܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܕܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ܀ cf. A. de Halleux, trans. *Philoxène de Mabbog. Commentaire du prologue johannique* (CSCO 381: SS 166), p. 43, n. 11 and Brock, 'Resolution of the Philoxenian/Harclean Problem,' p. 328. Brock translates the word '*qeryānā*' in this passage as 'pronunciation.'

[394] A. de Halleux, ed., *Philoxène de Mabbog. Lettre aux Moines de Senoun* (CSCO 231: SS 98) (Louvain, 1963): ܐܠܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ ܦܫܩܘ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ: ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ: ܟܕ ܠܐ ܢܛܪܘܗܝ ܠܚܬܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܕܐܡܝܪܝܢ ܠܘܬ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܠܚܬܝܬ: ܘܠܐ ܫܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܐ܆ ܟܕܒܘ ܘܟܬܒܘ ܡܕܡ ܕܫܦܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܠܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܣܒܪܘ ܕܐܬܥܝܕܬ ܗܘܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܢ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܠܘܬܗ ܕܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ܆ ܘܠܐ ܐܣܬܟܠܘ ܕܐܢ ܥܡ ܗܝ ܕܐܬܒܣܪ. ܕܐܬܦܫܩܬ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܘܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܩ̈ܠܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܐܠܘ ܐܬܦܫܩܘ. ܗܘܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܥܝܕܐ ܠܘܬ ܟܠܢܫ܆ ܘܣܒܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܟܒܪ ܗܝ܆ ܙܕܩ ܕܠܣܘܟܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ܆ ܕܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ ܡܣܟܢܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܘܠܐ ܢܬܬܐ ܠܩܕܡܘܗܝ܆ ܒܝܕ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ. FT in A. de Halleux, trans., *Philoxène de Mabbog. Lettre aux Moines de Senoun* (CSCO 232: SS 99) (Louvain, 1963), pp. 45.

progress and accuracy which statements like Ḥunayn's presuppose. The passage from Jacob of Edessa's letter on orthography, quoted above, where Jacob mentions certain technical philosophical words in Syriac not being used by Philoxenos, in addition to other Syriac Fathers, indicates that the same process of linguistic devolpment and increasing precision continued to operate after Philoxenos' time. And Miaphysite re-translations would not go unnoticed and uncritized by rivals in the Church of the East: in the eighth century, Shahdost of Tirhan would condemn his theological adversaries and the damage they had done to Scripture. 'In the likeness of the swine of the forest,' he wrote,

> they dared to corrupt the vineyards of the divine scriptures. For they have warred without shame against the words which are spoken about the manhood of our Lord, and which manifestly declare the duality of his natures. And they changed and drew them after their opinions which they had learned from the ancient Jews. For they are like the enemies of the salvation of all.

Shahdost would then go on to list passages which had been changed and mistranslated in order to support a Miaphysite theological agenda.[395]

Other instances of such awareness of the deficiencies of previous translations can also be found in the Syriac tradition. Sergios of Resh'ayna's translations come under at times sharp criticism by Ḥunayn in the ninth century. Sergios, however, translated more than just Galen and already in the seventh century, Syriac-speaking scholars were aware of imprecision in his work. I have already cited the late seventh-

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[395] Translation L. Abramowski and A.E. Goodman in their *A Nestorian Collection of Christological Texts. Cambridge University Library MS. Oriental 1319*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 1972), p. 6. More generally, pp. 6-8 contain Shahdost's attacks on Miaphysites for altering the text of Scripture. For discussion, see *ibid*., xxviii-xxxii, with the suggestion, p. xxxi, that Philoxenos' new translation of the NT was the trigger of Shahdost's remarks. Syriac text can be found in vol. 2, p. 5: ܘܒܕܡܘܬ ܚܙܝܪܐ ܕܒܥܒܐ ܐܡܪܚܘ ܠܡܚܒܠܘ ܟܪ̈ܡܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ: ܐܬܟܬܫܘ ܓܝܪ ܕܠܐ ܒܗܬܬܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܐܡ̈ܝܪܢ ܥܠ ܐܢܫܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ ܘ ܕܓܠܝܐܝܬ ܡܟܪܙܢ ܥܠ ܬܪܝܢܘܬ ܟܝ̈ܢܘܗܝ. ܘܫܚܠܦܘ ܘܓܪܘ ܐܢܝܢ ܒܬܪ ܬܪ̈ܥܝܬܗܘܢ: ܗܢܐ ܕܝܠܦܘܗ ܡܢ ܝܗܘ̈ܕܝܐ ܥܬܝ̈ܩܐ ܗܘܘ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܟ ܒܥܠܕܒܒ̈ܐ ܕܚܝ̈ܐ ܕܟܠ

century figure Phokas of Edessa as evidence for there being an awareness on the part of Syriac-speaking scholars of a continuous and interconnected nature of their tradition of translation. Unsurprisingly, Phokas of Edessa also was aware that the translations that came before him could stand improvement. The translation of (Ps) Dionysios that Phokas executed (and which Patriarch Timothy I later sought a copy of) also contained scholia, much of which were a translation by Phokas of the παραθέσις of John of Scythopolis [Baishan]. Phokas offers the following information about his own translation of this work:

> Now, as I have stated, new insight bursts forth every day out of the searching and study of the Holy Scriptures, for those who meditate upon them. Providentially, this holy book which has been spoken of, which is written in Greek script, has come into my humble hands: in it are scholia (that is, marvelous explanatory notes) on these words whose meaning has been difficult, as we have had occasion to mention. It was written by an Orthodox individual, worthy of good memory, a scholar (σχολαστικός) by trade, but John by name, from the city of Scythopolis. I have taken great care, as one who is not able...in translating the scholia from the Greek language to Syriac, in addition to those things which I found in the old translation of Sergios, [things] *which are not translated with precision.*[396]

Like Philoxenos in his *Letter to the Monks of Senoun* and Ḥunayn after him, Phokas of Edessa was aware that translations could be improved and that continued study of a

[396] BL Add. 12,151, dated to 804 AD. Emphasis mine. As with the previous quote of Sergios, the Syriac in this passage is at times rather obscure and I have omitted the parts that were most difficult. The full text can be found in Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 494 and in G. Wiessner, pp. 198-199 and runs as follows: ܗܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܫܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܝ ܕܐܡܪܬ: ܕܡܢ ܒܥܬܐ ܘܗܪܓܐ ܠܟܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܩ̈ܕܝܫܐ: ܢܗܘܪܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܢܒܥ ܒܟܠܝܘܡ ܠܕܡܬܒܝܢܝܢ ܒܗܘܢ: ܡܢ ܒܛܝܠܘܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ. ܐܬܬ ܠܐܝ̈ܕܝܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܡܚܝ̈ܠܬܐ: ܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܬܡܪ: ܕܟܬܝܒ ܒܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܝܘܢܝܬܐ: ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܕܝܢ ܣܟ̈ܘܠܝܐ ܐܘ ܟܝܬ ܦܘܫ̈ܩܐ ܬܡܝ̈ܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܥܣܩ ܣܘܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܢ [[ܕܐܡܪܢ]] ܠܡܐܡܪ. ܕܟܬܝܒ [ܟܬܝܒ] ܠܐܢܫ ܬܪܝܨ ܫܘܒܚܐ. ܫܘܐ ܠܕܘܟܪܢܐ ܛܒܐ: ܣܟܘܠܣܛܝܩܐ ܡܢ ܒܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ: ܝܘܚܢܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܫܡܐ: ܡܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܣܩܘܬ. ܐܬܚܦܛܬ ܐܝܟ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܗܘܝܬ: ܕܐܬܚܦܛܬ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܦܫܘܛ ܐܝܟ ܚܝܠܗ ܒܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ ܠܫܢܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ. ܠܡܦܫܩܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܣܟ̈ܘܠܝܐ. ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܒܥܡܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܫܟܚܬ ܒܗ ܒܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ ܕܗܘܬ ܩܕܡ ܕܣܪܓܝܣ. ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܚܬܝܬܘܬܐ ܡܦܩܝܢ. (text taken from Wright; double bracket's indicate a reading taking from Wiessner's text instead of Wright's). FT available in M. van Esbroeck, 'La triple preface syriaque de Phocas,' in Y. de Andia, ed., *Denys l'Aréopagite et sa postérité en Orient et en Occident* (Paris, 1996), pp. 171-172.

text could lead to increases in precision and progress in understanding its exact meaning.

I have already mentioned that the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen were first translated at the end of the fifth century then revised in the sixth and again in 623-624. George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes (d. 724 AD) has left us a letter, probably from the first several decades of the eighth century, which shows both that different versions of the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen were being read and which also indicates that poor-quality translations were a problem that readers confronted. George's *Letter 6* is a response to a query written by his synkellos Jacob about a passage in Gregory's *Oration 2*, which concerns priesthood. Jacob was having problems understanding a passage in this homily. George begins by quoting the passage which Jacob had sent to him. It is written in a tortured Syriac which borders on the nonsensical:

> [I write] since you asked me, O my spiritual son and priest, Mar Jacob, about a certain passage of Gregory the Theologian's (θεολόγος) which is located in that apologetic homily concerning priesthood,[397] which he composed when he returned from Pontus and which runs as follows: 'Indeed, first of all, of the things we have spoken, this one merits caution: that we not appear bad painters of wondrous virtue, or rather, I say that as regards [being] painters, the [caution] is not [against being] bad, but rather [against being] a bad archetype for the many. Otherwise, we will not run far from the proverb: we presume to heal others while we ourselves break out in sores.'[398]

[397] Oration 2.13. For the Greek text, see J. Bernardi, *Grégoire de Nazianze: discours 1-3* (*Sources chrétiennes* 247) (Paris, 1978), p. 106: Πρῶτον μὲν δὴ τοῦτο, ὧν εἴπομεν, εὐλαβεῖσθαι ἄξιον, μὴ φαινώμεθα τῆς θαθμασίας ἀρετῆς κακοὶ ζωγράφοι, μᾶλλον δὲ ζωγράφον οὐ φαύλων ἴσως, τῶν δὲ πολλῶν φαῦλον ἀρχέτυπον, ἢ τῆς παροιμίας μὴ πόρρω θέομεν, ἄλλους ἰατρεύειν ἐπιχειροῦντες αὐτοὶ βρύοντες ἕλκεσι.

[398] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 263a (9.1.2 in my edition): ܡܛܠ ܕܫܐܠܬܢܝ ܐܘ ܒܪܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܪܘܚܢܐ ܘܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܡܛܠ ܡܠܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܕܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܬܐܘܠܘܓܘܣ ܠܘܬܗ: ܐܝܕܐ ܕܣܝܡܐ ܒܡܐܡܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܦܩ ܗܘ ܕܥܒܕ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܗܦܟ ܡܢ ܦܢܛܘܣ ܗܟܢܐ: ܗܝ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܟܢܐ: ܠܘܩܕܡ ܡܢ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܘܡܛܠ ܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܢܢ ܗܕܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܕܢܙܕܗܪ: ܕܠܐ ܢܬܚܙܐ ܨܝܪ̈ܐ ܒܝܫܐ ܕܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܬܡܝܗܬܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܨܝܪܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܝܫܐ: ܡܢ ܒܪܐ ܠܗ ܠܣܓܝܐܐ: ܕܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܕܝܢ. ܐܚܪܢ ܐܝܟܐ ܐܪܟ ܬܦܢܝܬܐ ܒܥܝܢܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢ ܡܬܠܐ ܠܐ ܪܗܛܝܢܢ ܪܚܝܩ: ܕܠܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܡܣܝܢ ܕܐܣܝܘܬܐ: ܟܕ ܚܢܢ ܒܫܚܝܢ ܡܫܚܝܢ.

Before George even attempts to explicate the meaning of this passage, he pauses to comment on the poor quality of the translation, as well as the existence of other similarly bad translations of works of the Fathers in Syriac:

> In the first place, I will remind you, O beloved in Our Lord, that the translation of this passage from Greek into Syriac has not been done with precision and the passage has not been ordered in a way that fits the sense and meaning of the Teacher. For this reason, it is all the more difficult and a source of uncertainty for readers and interpreters, as is the case with many other [passages] in the writings of the holy teachers and other authors: they are difficult and sources of uncertainty for the same reason.[399]

As a result, George's first act of explanation is to offer a better translation of the passage in question. To do so, he cites his own teacher—Athanasios of Balad, a name which we have already encountered a number of times:

> Now, the rendering of this passage is more apt and precise in the way that Patriarch Athanasios, who is among the saints, explained to me.[400] In the following way: 'In the first place, therefore, of the things we have spoken, this deserves our caution: that we not appear bad painters of wondrous virtue, or rather [that we not appear] a bad archetype; perhaps it is not bad for painters, yet it is nevertheless bad for the many, or we will not run far from the proverb: "We presume to heal the many while we ourselves are breaking out in sores."' This is a more straightforward rendering of the passage.[401]

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[399] BL Add. 12,154, fols. 263a-263b (9.1.3 in my edition): ܠܘܩܕܡ ܡܢ ܡܥܗܕ ܐܢܐ ܠܚܒܝܒܘܬܟ ܕܒܡܪܢ. ܕܗܘ ܦܘܫܩܗ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܠܐ ܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ ܚܒܝܪ. ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܝܡ ܠܗܘܢܐ ܘܠܣܘܟܠܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܡܛܠܗܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ. ܘܡܬܥܣܩܐ ܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܘܡܬܦܠܓܢܐ ܠܩܪܘܝܐ ܘܠܡܦܫܩܢܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܕܡܟܬܒܢܐ

[400] Compare to scholion in Add. 14,725, (See W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1871), vol. 2, p. 443). '*pasheq lī*' or 'translated for me.' Cf. V. Ryssel, *Georgs des Araberbischofs: Gedichte und Briefe* (Leipzig, 1891), p. 63 'mir übersetzt,' though I.E. Barsoum, *al-Lū'lū' al-manthūr fī tārīkh al-'ulūm wa-'l-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (Baghdad, 1976), understood it to mean 'explained,' cf. p. 312, '*kamā sharaḥa lī...*' This verb could potentially mean the same as *tareṣ*, 'to correct,' *afeq*, 'to translate, edit,' and *targem*, 'interpret, translate.' See comments on the meanings of these verbs in S.P. Brock, 'Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte der Nonnos zugeschriebenen mythologischen scholion im Syrischen,' *ZDMG*, Supplementa 1,2 (1969), p. 462; idem., *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 28-29; J.-C.Haelewyck, *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera. Versio Syriaca I: Oratio XL* (CSCG 49: Corpus Nazianzenum 14) (Turnhout/Leuven, 2001), pp. VII-VIII.

[401] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 263b (9.1.4 in my edition) ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܟܝܠ ܗܘ ܦܘܫܩܗ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܠܫܪܝܪܘܬ ܘܡܬܬܐܝܡܐܝܬ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܒܝܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܫܩ ܠܝ ܗܟܢܐ+ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܢ: ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܥܘܕܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ. ܕܠܐ ܢܬܚܙܐ ܨܝܪܐ ܒܝܫܐ ܕܡܬܕܡܪܬܐ ܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ. ܡܟܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܐܪܟ ܛܘܦܣܐ ܒܝܫܐ. ܠܨܝܪܐ ܡܢ ܠܘ ܒܝܫܐ. ܠܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܝܫܐ. ܐܘ ܡܢ ܡܬܠܐ ܠܐ ܢܪܗܛ ܠܪܘܚܩܐ. ܕܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܡܫܝܢ ܠܣܓܝܐܐ. ܟܕ ܚܢܢ ܫܘܚܢܐ ܡܒܥܒܥܝܢ+ ܗܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܦܘܫܩܗ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ

As Ḥunayn would do over a century later, George gave his estimation and evaluation of the relative worth of different renderings.[402]

In the Beginning...was Greek

Of course, before Syriac experienced the phenomenon of multiple translations and revisions of a single text, the same thing had occurred in Greek—also with the Bible. As Timothy's statement indicates, there was a host of translations of the Old Testament into Greek from Hebrew. In addition to the well-known Septuagint and Origen's Hexaplaric revision of it, there were the translations of Aquila, Symmachos and Theodotion (along with the related *Kaige* revision) and the Lucianic recension as well. Additionally, there were the three anonymous translations referred to as the Quinta, Sexta, and Septima. Furthermore, Church Fathers referred to a translation as τὸ ἑβραῖος/τὸ ἑβραϊκον which may have been the name of a translation of at least some parts of the Old Testament into Greek. Similarly, references to ὁ σύρος, 'the Syrian,' may have referred to another translation into Greek and τὸ σαμαρ(ε)ιτικόν seems to have referred to a translation (perhaps based on the Septuagint) of the Samaritain

[402] The final part of *Letter 6* offers an improved translation of another passage from the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen. See BL Add. 12,154 fol. 264b (section 9.3.1 in my edition): 'From that [homily] concerning Gorgonia, his sister: "Of those of the promise, and of those of Isaac—from whom—and of those whose offering is a reasonable sacrifice and a lamb and a type (τύπος) of that which is more excellent, which entered in on his behalf." [It is translated] more clearly as follows: "Of those of the promise, and of those of whom Isaac is, and of those whose offering is the reasonable sacrifice, Isaac, and that lamb which entered in on his behalf and which was a type (τύπος) of that which is more excellent."'
ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܥܠ ܓܘܪܓܘܢܝܐ ܚܬܗ. ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܘܠܟܢܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܣܚܩ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܕܝ ܐܝܟܢܐ. ܘܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܗܘܢ ܗܿܘ ܕܒܚܐ ܡܠܝܠܐ. ܘܐܡܪܐ ܘܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܝܬܪ. ܗܘ ܕܚܠܦܘܗܝ ܥܠ. ܡܛܠ ܝܬܝܪ ܢܗܝܪܐܝܬ܀ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܘܠܟܢܐ ܘܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܣܚܩ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܘܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܗܘܢ܆ ܗܿܘ ܕܒܚܐ ܡܠܝܠܐ ܐܝܣܚܩ. ܐܦ ܐܡܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܚܠܦܘܗܝ ܥܠ. ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ ܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܝܬܪ.

Pentateuch. There seems also to have been another biblical translator named Josephus (not to be confused with Flavius Josephus).[403]

These translations and revisions also generated comments about the relative reliability and attractiveness of different versions; Antiochene Biblical exegesis, modeled on the pagan grammatical tradition, would have included as part of its method a discussion of alternate readings from other translations of a given verse or passage in the Scripture.[404] Like biologists combing rainforests for exotic and rare species of plants and animals, modern scholars have devoted entire lives to carefully and patiently collecting references to witnesses to these various versions in patristic texts. A study of the fragments of Eusebios of Emesa's (d. before 360 AD) *Commentary on Genesis* shows him citing the Hebrew Bible, in addition to the Syriac and (rarely) Aquila, Symmachos and Theodotion when problems confronted him in the text of the Septuagint; Eusebios could admit that there were errors in the translation of the Septuagint and even in the Syriac and appeal to the Hebrew was given pride of place in solving obscurities in the Septuagint text of Genesis.[405] Origen, by contrast, could cite other Greek versions as well as the Hebrew in his exegesis, but did not give the latter the same priority that Eusebios of Emesa would after him and maintained a preference

[403] For complexity of subject, the study of the Greek versions of the OT is perhaps only rivaled by the study of the Diatessaron. For the information in this paragraph, see N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las versiones Griegas de la Biblia*, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1998), esp. pp.119-178, 227-239. See also, K.H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, 2000), pp. 29-44. On τὸ ἑβραῖος/τὸ ἑβραϊκον and ὁ σύρος, see the discussion in R.B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress: The Use of Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac Biblical Texts in Eusebius of Emesa's Commentary on Genesis* (Louvain, 1997), pp. 51-75.

[404] For this, see R.B. ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 97-98. This comparison of different versions was supposed to have occurred in the part of exegesis known as τὸ διορθωτικόν, though ter Haar Romeny notes that textual critical discussions of variants might also occur in τὸ ἐζηγητικόν and τὸ κριτικόν and in fact, in the case of Eusebios of Emesa (p. 105), his discussion occurs as part of τὸ ἐζηγητικόν and τὸ κριτικόν and infrequently as part of τὸ διορθωτικόν.

[405] See ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 106-112.

for the renderings of the Septuagint.[406] Likewise, Eusebios of Caesarea seems to have had a preference for the Septuagint over other versions: when it diverged from the Hebrew, it was because the latter had been changed; Eusebios might also appeal to other Greek versions, but did so in order to help understand a passage in the Septuagint. In very rare instances, he might prefer Aquila, Symmachos, Theodotion and the Hebrew when they all agreed against the Septuagint.[407] Jerome, for his part, when confronted with a problem in the Biblical text would at the very least defer to the Hexaplaric Septuagint of Origen, but for him, the ultimate authority lay with the Hebrew text which he would read with the elucidating help of Aquila, Symmachos, Theodotion and rabbinic tradition.[408] Theodore of Mopsuestia's attitude towards the various available versions of the OT changed with time; he recognized that the the Septuagint was a translation of the Hebrew text and thus the latter had a special place of authority, but interestingly, Theodore still held the Septuagint as the preferred version. The Hebrew text's economy of expression meant that translating it too literally into Greek would cause confusion; he therefore held that the Septuagint translation was the best Greek method of accessing the Hebrew. As for other Greek translations of the OT, they would come to be cited less and less in Theodore's work; 'the Syrian,' too, would come to be viewed with suspicion and as containing errors.[409] Even Ephrem the Syrian could be involved in this game: in his *Commentary on Genesis* he twice makes reference to a non-Peshitta translation of the Biblical text without

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[406] See ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 116-120 for a discussion of Origen's use of different biblical versions and a comparision of his attitudes with those of Eusebios of Emesa.

[407] See ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 120-124.

[408] See ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 124-131.

[409] See ter Haar Romeny, *A Syrian in Greek Dress*, pp. 135-137.

referring to his source by name. Whatever his source, its translation is identical to none other than the Jewish Targum Onqelos.[410]

Every Translator has a Story

One of the most notable characteristics of the *Risāla* is Ḥunayn's practice of giving the translation history of each work of Galen listed; as we have seen, these translation histories might contain often harshly critical comments on the quality of the translations. In 392 AD, however, over four centuries before the birth of Ḥunayn, Epiphanios of Salamis (d. 403 AD) composed a work referred to by scholars as *On Weights and Measures* which in effect did the same thing—not for the works of Galen, but rather for the Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible. *On Weights and Measures* survives as a whole only in a Syriac translation for which two complete manuscripts survive: one written between 648 and 659 AD, and one written before the ninth century.[411]

Epiphanios begins *On Weights and Measures* with a discussion of the meaning of the various textual-critical signs a reader might encounter in the Greek Biblical text: the asterisk, the obelus, the lemniscus and the hypolemniscus—Aristarchian symbols that Origen had introduced into his revision of the Septuagint to signal divergences among the various Greek versions and the Hebrew text.[412] The treatise then shifts to the question of the translations themselves: 'And it is well for us also to explain the

[410] For this, see R.B. ter Haar Romeny, 'The Peshitta and its Rivals,' *The Harp* 11-12 (1998-1999), p. 24 and also see n. 6. Ephrem does this at Genesis 49:10 and 49:23.

[411] There are also extracts preserved in so-called Syriac masoretic manuscripts associated with the monastery of Qarqafta. See M. Sprengling, 'Forward,' p. viii and J.E. Dean, 'Introduction,' pp. 2-6, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version* (*Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization* 11) (Chicago, 1935). For Epiphanios' composition of *On Weights and Measures* in 392, see *ibid*., p. 2. The critical edition of the Greek text can be found in H. Μουτσουλα, 'Τὸ «Περὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν» ἔργον Ἐπιφανίου τοῦ Σαλαμῖνος' *ΘΕΟΛΟΓΙΑ* 44 (1973) pp. 157-209. For the Georgian version of *On Weights and Measures*, which has been transmitted in two separate parts, see M.-J. van Esbroeck, ed. and trans., *Les versions géorgiennes d'Épiphane de chypre*. Traité des poids et des mesures (CSCO 460-461: SI 19-20) (Louvain, 1984).

[412] See *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, trans. Dean, pp. 16-23

matter of the translators,' Epiphanios writes, 'For a knowledge of them will be helpful to you, since by the inclusion of their story it will be seen who and whence and of what race each of them was, and what was the cause of their translating.'[413] At this point, the history behind the translation of the Septuagint, as well as the OT translations of Aquila, Symmachos and Theodotion is given. Also discussed are the anonymous translations scholars refer to as the Quinta and Sexta[414] as well as Origen's activities in putting together the Hexapla and the Octapla.[415]

Epiphanios pulls no punches in letting his readers know how he views the quality of certain translations. Aquila was a pagan convert to Christianity who then apostasized to Judaism and learned Hebrew to translate the Old Testament to Greek.

> He was moved not by the right motive, but (by the desire) to distort certain of the words occurring in the translation of the seventy-two [sc. the Septuagint] that he might proclaim the things testified to about Christ in the divine Scriptures to be fulfilled in some other way, on account of a certain shame that he felt (to proffer) a senseless excuse for himself. And this second translation by Aquila came about after such a (long) time as this...But we must say, beloved, the words in it are incorrect and perversely translated, (words) which carry condemnation for him in the very translation he made.[416]

Symmachos was a Samaritan, 'of their wise men, but unhonored by his own people.' 'Afflicted with the lust for power,' and 'angry with his tribe,' he converted to Judaism

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[413] Translation Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, pp. 23-24. Syriac text in *ibid*., p. 92 (51c-51d): ܗܕܐ ܠܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܦ ܠܥܠܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܠܡܘܕܥܘ ܢܥܒܕ ܠܟ ܨܒܪ ܘܡܕܥܬܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ: ܡܛܘ ܕܬܚܙܐ ܕܬܫܥܝܬܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܬܠܬܠܗܘܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܡܢܘ ܘܡܢ ܐܝܟܐ ܘܡܢ ܐܝܢܐ ܫܪܒܬܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ. ܘܕܠܡܦܫܩܘ ܐܝܕܐ ܥܠܬܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܬ܀

[414] On the Quinta, Sexta and Septima, see N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las Versiones Griegas de la Biblia,* 2nd ed., (Madrid, 1998), pp. 163-169 and S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 118-124. cf. K.H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, 2000), p. 50.

[415] See *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, trans. Dean, pp. 24-37.

[416] Translation Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, pp. 31-32. Syriac text in *ibid*., p. 95 (55b): ܦܘܫܩܐ ܗܘ ܠܗ ܦܩܚ. ܠܐ ܒܕ ܒܫܘܫܒܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ ܐܬܬܙܝܥ. ܐܠܐ ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܢܥܘܠ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܒܗ: ܐܬܡܠܠ ܒܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܫܒܥܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܣܒܪ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܛܠ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ ܣܗܝܕ̈ܢ. ܐܚܪܢܐܝܬ ܠܡܫܠܡܘ. ܡܛܠ ܒܗܬܬܐ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ. ܠܡܬܠ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܠܗ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܬܐ܀ ܘܗܘܐ ܗܢܐ ܬܪܝܢܐ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܩܘܠܐ. ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ...ܚܝܒܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܚܒܝܒܐ. ܘܡ̈ܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ. ܘܡܫܩܠܐܝܬ ܡܦܩ̈ܢ. ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܝܢ ܡܚܣܢܘܬܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ: ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܡܦܩ̈ܝܢ.

and executed a translation of the Old Testament 'in order to pervert the translation current among the Samaritans.'[417] Theodotion was a Marcionite-turned-Jew who also made a translation that, to its credit, agreed in a number of places with the Septuagint, 'for he derived many (peculiar) practices from the translational habits of the seventy-two [sc. the translators of the Septuagint].'[418] Epiphanios has a very clear notion of which of the various Greek translations was superior: the Septuagint.

> Now you become the judge, O great lover of the good, of such a matter as this, whether the truth is more likely to be found with these three—I mean Aqula, Symmachos, and Theodotion—who, moreover, were not together, but were remote from one another in both time and place; and there were not many, but only three, and yet they were unable to agree with one another. Or (was the truth) with the seventy-two, who were the first to translate, were at the same time, and were divided into thirty-six groups, according to the command of the king? And, furthermore, they did not converse with one another, but by the Holy Spirit they brought out the entire translation in absolute agreement; and where there was need for an addition in explanation of a word, it was the same among them all. Though they did not know what each one by himself was translating, they agreed absolutely with one another, and the translations were identical. And where they cast out words, they translated in agreement with one another. So it is clear to those who through love of the truth seek to investigate that they were not merely translators but also, in part, prophets.[419]

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417 Translation Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, pp. 32-33. For Syriac text, cf. *ibid.*, p. 96 (55c-55d): ܣܘܡܟܘܣ ܐܝܟ ܫܡܪܝܐ: ܡܢ ܚܟܝܡܐ ܕܠܘܬܗܘܢ: ܟܕ ܠܐ ܐܬܝܩܪ ܡܢ ܥܡܐ ܕܝܠܗ: ܘܐܬܟܪܗ ܪܚܡܬ ܪܝܫܢܘܬܐ: ܘܐܬܥܛܦ ܥܠ ܫܪܒܬܐ ܕܝܠܗ. ܦܢܐ ܠܘܬ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ...ܗܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܣܘܡܟܘܣ. ܠܘܬ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܫܡܪܝܐ ܒܕ ܦܩܡ. ܐܦܩ ܠܦܘܫܩܐ ܬܠܬܝܐ.

418 Translation Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, p. 33. For Syriac text, *ibid.*, p. 96 (56a): ܕܠܡܐܬܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܐܫܠܡ ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܕܫܠܡ ܠܗܘܢ ܫܒܥܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܐܫܠܡ ܕܦܘܫܩܐ ܟܢܫ ܐܝܬ ܘܠܗܢܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܕܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܫܒܥܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ❖

419 Translation Dean, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures*, pp. 33-34. For Syriac text, *ibid.*, p. 96 (56a-56b): ܕܝܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܗܘܝ. ܐܘ ܪܚܡ ܛܒܬܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܥܠ ܫܘܥܪܢܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ. ܠܘܬ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܡܟܝܠ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܗܘ ܫܪܪܐ. ܠܘܬ ܗܢܘܢ ܬܠܬܐ: ܐܡܪܢܐ ܐܩܘܠܐ ܘܣܘܡܟܘܣ ܘܬܐܘܕܘܛܝܘܢ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܦܠܐ ܐܟܚܕܐ ܗܘܘ: ܐܠܐ ܪܚܝܩܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܚܕ: ܒܙܒܢܐ ܘܒܕܘܟܬܐ: ܡܢ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܐܢܫܝܢ: ܘܠܐ ܗܘܘ ܐܠܐ ܠܩܘܒܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܠܬܠܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܘܠܐ ܐܫܬܘܝܘ ܠܡܫܠܡ ܚܕ ܠܚܕ. ܐܘ ܠܘܬ ܗܢܘܢ ܫܒܥܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܩܕܡܝܐ ܦܫܩܘ ܘܐܬܦܠܓܘ ܠܙܘܓܐ ܬܠܬܝܢ ܘܫܬܐ ܒܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܕܡܠܟܐ. ܘܬܘܒ ܕܠܐ ܡܡܠܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܚܕ ܥܡ ܚܕ. ܐܠܐ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܐܦܩܘ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܟܠܗ ܒܫܘܝܘܬܐ. ܘܐܝܟܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܦܘܫܩܗ ܕܡܠܬܐ. ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܝ ܚܕܐ ܗܘܬ. ܟܕ ܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܡܢܐ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܦܫܩ. ܒܫܘܝܘܬܐ ܠܚܕܕܐ ܫܠܡܘ. ܘܫܘܝܢ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܐܫܬܟܚܘ. ܐܝܟܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܠܐ ܐܦܩܘ: ܟܕ ܫܠܡܝܢ ܠܚܕܕܐ ܦܫܩܘ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܓܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܚܘܒܗ ܕܫܪܪܐ ܠܡܒܨܝܘ ܒܥܝܢ. ܕܠܐ ܗܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܦܫܩܢܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܗܘܘ. ܐܠܐ ܘܒܡܢܬܐ ܢܒܝܐ.

Ḥunayn's motivation for evaluating previous translations in the *Risāla* is more philological than that of Epiphanios in *On Weights and Measures*—there is a clear theological agenda at work in the treatise—but the similarity between what the two documents are in part doing—listing and evaluating previous translations of a certain text (or texts) remains nevertheless striking. Had Ḥunayn perhaps read *On Weights and Measures*? Though we lack a clear connection between Ḥunayn and Epiphanios, the survival of *On Weights and Measures* as a complete work only in Syriac suggests that it was a work being read by Syriac-speaking scholars concerned with Biblical translation and textual criticism (recall its discussion of Aristarchian symbols)—which Ḥunayn, as a Bible translator himself undoubtedly was. We furthermore also know that *On Weights and Measures* was in fact being read in the ninth century in Iraq from the work of a near-exact contemporary of Ḥunayn, Moshe bar Kepha.

Moshe (d. 903) was a Miaphysite born in 813, some five years after Ḥunayn. Hailing from Balad, Moshe was a periodeute in Takrit for ten years and was elected bishop of Beth Reman, Beth Kiyonaya and Mosul around 863. Though not as famous as his contemporary Ḥunayn, Moshe was also a prolific writer of broad interests whose works included a *Hexaemeron*, an introduction to the Κατηγορίαι, a treatise on free will and predestination, an ecclesiastical history, and a number of commentaries, biblical, patristic and liturgical.[420] Among his works, Moshe has left us an *Introduction* to the Psalms,[421] which interests us here because it provides more context for seeing Ḥunayn

[420] On Moshe bar Kepha, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 281-282, Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, pp. 207-211 and S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, pp. 69-70. NB: Brock dates Moshe's birth to ca. 833.

[421] See G. Diettrich, ed. and trans., *Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter* (Giessen, 1901). For Moshe bar Kepha as author of this work, see J-M Vosté, 'L'introduction de Mose bar Kepa aux psaumes de

and his activities as examples of Late Antique phenomena best understood in the context of Syriac scholarly activity.

Moshe's introduction has thirty-two chapters, each dealing with a different question related to the Psalms. Of particular relevance to us here is the twenty-eighth chapter, which 'shows how many translations from the Hebrew language to the Greek language the Old Testament has, and how many from the Hebrew language to the Syriac language, and which of these translations is the most precise of all the translations.'[422] In its concern for discussing the number of different translations available for a particular work and their relative quality, this chapter is not unlike one of the entries in the *Risāla* on a certain work of Galen. Given that Moshe and Ḥunayn were contemporaries, it is not hard to imagine that the *Risāla* and Moshe's introduction were written within decades or even years of one another.

In Chapter 28 of his *Introduction*, Moshe discusses the historical circumstances surrounding six different Greek translations of the Hebrew Old Testament: the Septuagint, as well as that of Aquila, Symmachos and Theodotion. He also refers to the Quinta and Sexta and describes the activities of Origen. Critical remarks can be found here as well: we are told that Aquila 'translated the books of the Old Testament from the Hebrew language to the Greek, not according to right opinion but rather perverse. With regard to those things which are written correctly in the Scriptures concerning

David,' *Revue Biblique* 38 (1929), pp. 217-219. For this point, see R.B. ter Haar Romeny, 'The Peshitta and its Rivals,' p. 24, n. 9.

[422] *Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter*, p. 107, ܩܦܠܐܘܢ ܕܥܣܪ̈ܝܢ ܘܬܡܢܝܐ ܕܡܚܘܐ ܕܟܡܐ ܡܦܩ̈ܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܕܝܬܩܐ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܕܗܘ̈ܝ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܘܟܡܐ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܘܐܝܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܦܩ̈ܬܐ ܚܬܝܬܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܦܩ̈ܬܐ.

Christ, he translated them in a different and twisted way.'[423] Though not always identical to the work of Epiphanios, Moshe's discussion of the history of these different translations is in fact largely derivative of *On Weights and Measures*.[424] But the *Introduction* is no mere example of a later scholar copying from an earlier one: it provides an excellent example of how Syriac-speaking scholars continued traditions from a Greek-speaking context like Epiphanios' and developed them in light of their own circumstances. Moshe does not just discuss the history of Greek translations of the Old Testament and parrot the wording of Epiphanios: he continues the discussion and makes it relevant in a Syriac-speaking context. There were also translations of the Bible into Syriac and there have been different opinions as to which one was superior:

> In our own Syriac tongue there are two translations of the Old Testament. One is the Peshitta, which we read; this was translated from Hebrew into Syriac. The Peshitta was translated from Hebrew into Syriac in the time of king Abgar of Edessa, as Mar Jacob [of Edessa] has said. Mar Jacob says that Addai the Apostle and the believing king Abgar sent a man to Jerusalem and the region of Palestine, and they translated the Old Testament from Hebrew into Syriac. The version of the Seventy Two was translated from Greek into Syriac, by Paul, bishop of Tella d-Mauzelat, in the time of the emperor Heraclius, according to some people. Of all these translations the Peshitta, which was translated from Hebrew into Syriac, is most exact, in that they say that the Hebrew tongue is closely related to Syriac. But Philoxenus of Mabbug says that of all the versions, that of the Seventy Two is the most exact: this is clear from the fact that our Lord and his disciples adduced testimonies from it in the Gospel and Acts, and so too did Paul.[425]

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[423] *Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter*, p. 109: ܘܦܫܩ ܠܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܕܐܬܝ̈ܢ ܚܠܘܦܬܐ ܡܢ ܠܥܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ. ܠܗ ܒܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ ܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܥܩܡܬܐ.. ܘܠܘܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܢܝܢ ܒܡ̈ܠܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ ܐܝܬ ܡܛܠ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܗܘ ܐܚܪܢܐܝܬ ܘܡܥܩܡܐܝܬ ܐܝܟ ܐܢܫ. For Moshe's discussion of all the various versions, see *ibid*., pp. 107-112.

[424] See Diettrich, *Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter*, p. 108, n. 1 and p. 110, nn. 1-4.

[425] Trans. S.P. Brock in *idem*., *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Kottayam, 1997), pp. 261-262. For the Syriac text, see G. Diettrich, ed. and trans., *Eine jakobitische Einleitung in den Psalter* (Giessen, 1901), pp. 113-115: ܬܘܒ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܬܪܬܝܢ ܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܕܕܝܬܩܐ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ.. ܚܕܐ ܗܕܐ ܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܕܩܪܝܢ ܒܗ̇. ܕܐܬܦܫܩܬ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ.. ܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܒ̈ܢ ܕܐܬܦܫܩܬ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ.. ܗܘ ܗܝ، ܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܒܙܒܢܗ ܕܐܒܓܪ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܐܬܦܫܩܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ.. ܗ̈ܘ ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܕܐܕܝ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܘܐܒܓܪ ܡܠܟܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܫܕܪܘ ܓܒܪܐ ܠܐܘܪܫܠܡ ܘܠܐܬܪܐ ܕܦܠܣܛܝܢܐ. ܘܐܦܫܩܘ ܘܐܥܒܪܘ ܠܕܝܬܩܐ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ..

Moshe's *Introduction* therefore provides us with evidence that Syriac-speaking scholars in ninth-century Iraq—Ḥunayn's contemporaries and 'friends' as he called them[426]—were still engaging in the types of scholarly activities that had been preoccupying Christian scholars since the time of Origen. Already in the late fifth or early sixth century, the translator of Gregory of Nyssa's *Commentary* on the Song of Songs had included a brief history of the Greek translations of the Bible as part of his translator's apologia.[427] It is also worth pointing out that brief histories of the translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Greek—essentially accounts like that of Moshe bar Kepha in Chapter 28 of his *Introduction*, only more compressed—might also be attached to the end of Syro-Hexaplaric manuscripts.[428] Given his thirst for manuscripts, there is little doubt that Ḥunayn would have come across such micro-histories of translations.

The *Risāla* therefore represents a merging of the tradition of commenting on the history (and quality) of previous translations of a text (the Bible) with the bibliographic tradition represented by the *Pinax* of Galen—the first book Ḥunayn enumerates in the *Risāla*—a book which Job of Edessa had translated into Syriac and which Ḥunayn himself

ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܐܘܟܝܬ. ܐܦܩܗ̇ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ .. ܦܘܠܐ ܐܦܘܣܛܘܠܐ ܕܐܬܠܐ ܕܡܘܕܐܬ ܒܟܬܒܗ
[ܕ]ܟܬܒܐ ܗܘܝܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ. ܕܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ. ܗܕܐ ܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܕܐܬܦܫܩܬ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ
ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܫܠܝܚܬܐ .. ܒܗܝ ܕܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܩܪܝܒ ܘܢܩܝܦ ܠܠܫܢܐ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ..
ܘܫܠܡܘܬܐܗ̇ ܕܡܢܗ ܠܗ̇ ܐܝܬ. ܕܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܬܪܗ̇ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܘܚܬܝܬܐ. ܘܡܛܠܗܕܐ ܡܢ
ܗ̇ܝ ܕܡܪܢ ܘܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ.. ܡܢܗ̇ ܐܝܬܝܘ ܡܫܘܕܥܐ ܒܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܘܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܦܪܟܣܝܣ. ܐܦ ܦܘܠܘܣ ܡܢܗ̇ ܐܝܬܝ
ܣܗܕܘܬܐ

[426] *Aṣḥābunā* See Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 18 (Arabic text) (GT p. 15), along with improvements to the text made available in idem., *Neue Materialien*, p. 17. cf. n. 118, above.

[427] See C. van den Eynde, *La version syriaque du commentaire de Grégoire de Nysse sur le cantique des cantiques*, (Louvain, 1939), pp. 75-76. On the contents of this apologia/letter, see above discussion.

[428] For example, the translation of the Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachos, Theodotion, the Quinta and the Sexta are all mentioned (and the history of some of them described) in the colophon to 4 Kings reproduced in P. de Lagarde, *Bibliothecae Syriacae* (Gottingen, 1892), pp. 255-256. For this point, I draw on R.B. ter Haar Romeny, 'Biblical Studies in the Church of the East: The Case of Catholicos Timothy I,' in M.F. Wiles, E.J. Yarnold eds, *Studia Patristica* vol. 34: *Historica, Biblica, Theologica et Philosophica* (Leuven, 2001), p. 510, n. 30.

later translated into Syriac and Arabic. In Ḥunayn's own words, Galen's goal in the *Pinax* was 'to describe the books which he composed and what his objective was in each one of them and what motivated him to write them, and for whom he wrote them, and at which point in his life.'[429]

Understanding Ḥunayn and other Syriac-speaking Greco-Arabic translators as still operating very much in a world of Late Antique Syriac Biblical and patristic scholarship casts new and interesting light on phenomena that scholars have previously puzzled over. Strohmaier has pointed out that in Greco-Arabic translation literature, translators usually dealt with the names of ancient lands and peoples by merely transcribing them into Arabic. Sometimes, however, these ancient names were replaced by ones which corresponded to the ninth- and tenth-century world in which the translators lived. 'Die Motive für dieses Verfahren,' he wrote, 'sind nicht deutlich.'[430] Unclear as the motives may have been, Strohmaier suggested that translators may have been influenced by the Byzantine practice of giving neighboring peoples classical names when referred to in chronicles. There also, he proposed, might have been a certain desire to keep texts purely Arabic at play in the decision to use contemporary names and peoples in translations.[431]

The actual motive, however, may actually have been much closer to home, for the Peshitta Old Testament engages in the exact same sort of selective 'modernizing' that Strohmaier detected in Greco-Arabic translation literature. As in the Greco-Arabic

[429] G. Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq über die syrischen und arabischen Galen- übersetzungen* (Leipzig, 1925), p. 3 (Arabic text); GT p. 3.

[430] See G. Strohmaier, 'Völker- und Ländernamen in der Griechisch- Arabischen Übersetzungsliteratur,' *Philologus* 118 (1974), pp. 266-271; quote from p. 266.

[431] G. Strohmaier, 'Völker- und Ländernamen in der Griechisch- Arabischen Übersetzungsliteratur,' p. 271.

translation literature, the Peshitta Old Testament usually prefers to simply transcribe place names.[432] Nevertheless, modernizing does take place: 'Qardu for Ararat, Matnin for Bashan, Indian for Ethiopian, Arab for Ishmaelite,' Weitzman notes. 1 Chronicles 13:5, 18:9 and 2 Chronicles 8:4 replace Hamath with Antioch, for example, and translators inserted locales in their own neighborhood in northern Mesopotamia in place of more distant and unfamiliar names: 'The Aramean district of Soba is thus equated with Nisibis in 1 Chr. 18-19. Harran was substituted for Aram Ma'achah at 1 Chr. 19:6. Mabbog is specified as Pharoah Neco's objective at 2 Kgs. 23:29 (where it is added to the text) and at 2 Chr. 35:20 (where it replaces Carchemish, in fact some 40 km to the north), in the account of Josiah's death at 2 Chron. 35:20.'[433] This practice of modernizing names can actually be found in the Targums as well.[434] In the Syriac tradition, furthermore, the practice of 'modernizing' or 'updating' place names to make them local and contemporary extends beyond the pages of the Bible. Ephrem the Syrian also engages in the practice.[435] The Syriac-speaking Greco-Arabic translators were merely doing what Syriac-speaking scholars had been doing for half a millenium.

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[432] See M. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 48.

[433] Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, pp. 48-49.

[434] As Weitzman points out, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, pp. 48-49, most of the examples of modernizing he offers are paralleled in the Targums. See also S.P. Brock, 'Jewish Traditions in Syriac Sources,' *Journal of Jewish Studies* 30 (1979), pp. 213-214 for this point. Brock also offers the following examples of modernizing/updating: Gen. 14:7 Hazazon-tamar in the Hebrew becomes En Geddi in the Peshitta and Deut. 1:46 Qadesh in the Hebrew becomes Reqem in the Peshitta. In both these cases, the Targum parallels the Peshitta in its updating. For these points, also see, S.P. Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition*, 2nd ed., (Piscataway, NJ, 2006), pp. 25-26.

[435] I am grateful to Alison Salvesen for this point. She has given me the following references for this point: R.M. Tonneau, ed., *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum* CSCO 152, SS 71 (Louvain, 1955), p. 65, lines 24-26, Erek = Edessa; Akar = Nisibis; Kalya = Ctesiphon; Rechoboth = Adiabene; Kalach = Hatra; Resen = Resh Aina. According to Alison, the first four of these changes occur in the Palestinian Targum. This is also based on her talk, 'Who's a Suryoyo? Some Syriac Writers on Syria and Syrians,' talk delivered at Princeton University, January 14, 2005.

In a later, Western medieval context, for Adelard of Bath perhaps translating 'Bath' in the place of 'Baghdad,' see C.S.F. Burnett, 'Some comments on the translating of works from Arabic into Latin in

the mid-twelfth century,' in A. Zimmermann and I. Craemer-Ruegenberg, eds., *Orientalische Kultur und Europäisches Mittelalter* (Berlin/New York, 1985), p. 164.

Chapter 3: Jacob of Edessa: Scholar at Work

Though Ḥunayn's contemporaries made explicit comparisions between him and Sergios of Resh'ayna, we unfortunately do not possess enough evidence about Sergios' career and attitudes to be able to make such a comparison ourselves. We do, however, possess a large amount of material from the pen of Jacob of Edessa, one of the most important philhellenes and scholars to have emerged from the Syriac-speaking world of the Middle East. Jacob studied at Alexandria, translated Aristotle and the Bible, wrote on scientific matters in his *Hexaemeron*, composed a chronicle, wrote extensively on canon law and was responsible for the beginnings of Syriac grammar; Baumstark compared him to no less a figure than Jerome.[436] In this chapter, my goal will be to attempt to sketch out a profile of Jacob as a scholar with the ultimate aim of bringing into clearer definition one of the most important Syriac scholarly antecedents to the 'Abbasid translation movement. Jacob represented the high point of a seventh-century Syriac intellectual renaissance and in the course of this chapter we will meet some of his other learned contemporaries as well.

To Err is Scribal

Syriac-speaking scholars were aware that not all manuscripts were created equal and that one needed to take manuscript variation and copyist error into account when closely studying a text. In his letter to scribes on orthography, Jacob of Edessa noted that he regarded the art of the scribe as 'exalted over all the arts.'[437] 'Just as,' he

[436] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 248. For studies on Jacob's work on history, law, Biblical translation and exegesis, grammar and translation, philosophy, liturgy, as well as his life, see most recently B. ter Haar Romeny, ed., *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (Leiden/Boston, 2008).

[437] G. Phillips, *A Letter by Mār Jacob Bishop of Edessa on Syriac Orthography* (London, 1869), p P. ܐ, ܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܕܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܘܡܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ: ܘܡܟܠܠܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܦܝܪ ܐܡܪܬ ܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܘ̈ܡܢܘܬܐ, my translation. The ET of Phillips can be found on *ibid*., p. 1.

contended, 'the art [of the scribe] is great and noble and first of all the arts, so too should carrying it out be much more honorable than all [other] practical endeavors.'[438] Those who are scribes, he argued, should be marked by mental acuity and intelligence. Reality, however, did not live up to Jacob's high expectations. 'Instead,' he lamented, 'I see that even here the craft suffers great wrong.

> Those who are much more deficient than many others—for the most part in intellect and natural cleverness—are coming in and learning [the art of the scribe] and laboring in it and copying out books, all the while knowing neither what they are seeing nor what they are writing when scribes dictate words. It is not so that they might make more mistakes that [copyists] are brought up [by me], but rather that they might receive [what I am saying] joyfully and learn and be corrected. Let them make haste to come forward [to what I am saying], wisely and discerningly, and they will know that we know many things concerning this art of the scribe—we who read more than they write.

Not only were the people doing scribal work in Jacob's day regrettably not very clever, they also did not seem to know where their ecclesiastical loyalties were supposed to lie and could do work for the opposing team. A question posed by a certain Addai to Jacob asked whether it was right for an Orthodox monk to copy out polemical questions which were against the Orthodox faith for a Heretic, in return for money or some other payment. Such a person, Jacob responded, 'is a traitor to the faith and to Christ, even if he does not sell it off for thirty pieces of silver like the original Betrayer.'[439] Scribes

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[438] *A Letter by Mār Jacob Bishop of Edessa on Syriac Orthography*, p. ܠ. ܘܐܦ ܗܘܐ ܟܝ ܓܝܪ ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗܝ̣ ܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܘܡܝܩܪܬܐ ܘܡܝܬܪܬܐ ܕܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܘ̈ܡܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇: ܐܦ ܫܘܡܠܝܗ̇ ܗܟܢ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܝܩܪ ܛܒ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܣܘܥܪ̈ܢܘܬܐ., my translation, but with reference to the ET by Phillips on p. 3.

[439] MS Mardin 310, fol. 203b: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܐ: ܕܢܟܬܘܒ ܠܗܪܛܝܩܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܕܡ. ܫܘ̈ܐܠܐ ܕܣܘܩܒܠܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܥܕܪܢ ܠܡܠܦܢܘܬܗ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬ ܫܘܒܚܐ: ܘܢܣܒ ܡܢܗ ܐܓܪܐ: ܐܘ ܡܢ ܟܡܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܣܢܝܩ ܠܗ ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܢܐ ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܦܢ ܠܐ ܒܬܠܬܝܢ ܕܟܣܦܐ ܙܒܢܗ: ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ Addai: Whether it is right for an Orthodox monk to copy out certain things for a heretic, [namely] questions which are in opposition, from among those which help his doctrine against the Orthodox Faith, and to take from him [sc. the heretic] a wage or a certain something which he is in need of. Jacob: Such a one is a traitor to the faith and to Christ, even if he has not sold it off for thirty pieces of silver like the original betrayer.' A similar but shorter canon by Jacob can be found in P. Bedjan, ed., *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei*, (Paris, 1898), p. 102: ܬܘܒܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܠܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ

were also prone to laziness and cutting corners when it came to doing their jobs. Jacob provides a listing of a whole host of unfortunate scribal shortcuts.

> Indeed, they work hard to fill up the number of quires, [arranged] in sections, either squeezing the lines together or squishing together the letters of the text or stretching them out or shortening them or pressing them together on account of rubrication or adding and taking away letters or splitting a certain word into two (and they divide it in a way that is inappropriate!) or they combine two words into one improperly. We, however, who dictate, make every effort that the sense and meaning of the things which are written be maintained and securely preserved in writing for those who encounter [the text], even if it means that the rubrication at the end of [some] lines is unintentionally corrupted by scribes—something which they are expert in [sc. correctly rubricating], but which they do not do.

Recognizing that his task might be a futile one and required his counseling scribes to take the more difficult path in executing their work, Jacob nevertheless sets himself to providing a list of prescriptions for scribes to follow.

> But so the objective of the things which we have stated be known to them, look now, I will set down for them a few cautionary statements with a view toward them being more careful about our aim, even if it means that they treat their own interest with scorn when [, in the course of writing a manuscript,] they learn that it would be quite convenient that a line jut out more or lack something, or that there be something which obstructs the sense or damages the meaning.[440]

ܕܪܫܥܐ: ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܬܪܬܝܢ. 'The scribe who writes out a polemical text for a heretic is a second Judas.' Literally, 'A second Jew,' but cf. suggested emendation of C. Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa: übersetzt und erläutert zum theil auch zuerst im grundtext veröffentlicht*, (Leipzig, 1886), p. 45, n (a GT is to be found on the same page). In light of the Mardin textual witness, Kayser's emendation was correct.

[440] *A Letter by Mār Jacob Bishop of Edessa on Syriac Orthography* (London, 1869), pp. ܗ – ܕ. ܐܠܐ ܫܪܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܒܪ ܡܬܠܬܠܐ ܬܘܒ ܦܫܛ ܐܦ ܣܘܪܟܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܦܫܛ ܓܝܪ ܢܬܝ ܡܢ ܐܣܛܪܐ. ܩܛܝܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܗܘ ܚܠܐ ܐ ܟܡܘܢܐ ܘܟܣܢܩܘܬܐ ܓܝܣܐܬܐ: ܚܫܝܠܝܢ ܘܢܠܦܝܢ ܠܗ ܘܦܠܓܝܢ ܚܕ ܘܡܚܒܪܝܢ ܚܠܦܐ: ܕܒ ܠܐ ܢܕܥܝܢ ܠܗ ܡܢܐ ܫܚܝ ܘܠܐ ܡܢܐ ܚܠܦܝܢ ܗܝ. ܕܬܘܒ ܢܚܫܠܝܢ ܢܬܬܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܢܦܩܠܘܢ ܣܘܣܐܝܬ ܘܐܠܦܘܢ. ܘܢܬܬܪܝ ܘܢ: ܢܬܦܪܣܘܢ ܠܟܬܒܘܢ ܣܟܝܡܐܝܬ ܘܦܘܫܩܐܝܬ. ܘܕܢܝܟܘܢ ܕܩܕܝܫܘܬܐ ܢܕܥܝܢ ܟܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܓܠܝܘܬܐ: ܚܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܦܪܫܝܢ: ܢܛܪ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܟܬܒܝܢ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܟܢܫ: ܢܝܚ ܦܡ ܕܢܡܠܘܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܟܘܪ̈ܣܐ ܐܝܟ ܦܘܪ̈ܣܐ ܕܒ ܐܘ ܡܥܨܪܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܣܛܪ̈ܐ ܐܘ ܡܚܒܨܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐܬ̈ܘܬܐ ܕܟܬܝܒܬܐ. ܐܘ ܡܫܪܚܝܢ ܐܘ ܡܟܪܝܢ. ܐܘ ܚܒܨܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܣܘܡܟܐ: ܐܘ ܡܘܣܦܝܢ ܐܬ̈ܘܬܐ ܘܡܒܨܪܝܢ ܐܘ ܦܪܫܝܢ ܡܠܬܐ ܠܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ. ܘܦܠܓܝܢ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܘܠܐ: ܐܘ ܚܒܪܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܠܚܕܐ ܠܐ ܚܫܚܐܝܬ. ܚܢܢ ܕܝܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܩܪܝܢ ܢܝܚ ܦܡ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܘܣܘܟܠܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒ̈ܢ ܢܬܢܛܪ: ܘܢܫܬܘܬܩ ܒܟܬܒܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ ܠܗܢܘܢ ܕܦܓܥܝܢ. ܐܦܢ ܢܗܘܐ ܕܢܬܚܒܠ ܣܘܡܟܐ ܕܫܘܠܡ ܣܛܪ̈ܐ: ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܨܒܝܢܗܘܢ ܕܟܬܘܒ̈ܐ. ܠܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܡܦܩܝܢ ܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܬܬܝܕܥ ܠܗܘܢ ܢܝܫܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܢ: ܗܐ ܣܐܡ ܐܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܩܠܝܠ ܙܘܗܪ̈ܐ: ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܢܬܒܝܢܘܢ ܒܗ ܕܢܝܫܐ ܗܘ ܕܝܠܢ ܢܬܪܐܝܬ. ܐܦܢ ܬܗܘܐ ܕܢܫܘܛܘܢ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܟܕ ܢܠܦܝܢ ܕܦܫܝܩܐ ܗܝ ܛܒ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܢܦܩ ܣܛܪܐ

Jacob's first fear was a very basic one: he worried that scribes would not copy the text they had as it was, but would rather let habit interfere with accurately reproducing what the text in front of them said.

> In the first place, I order all those who write out the books which I have translated and composed that, as much as they are able, they not intentionally alter any of the various things which they are accustomed to write—neither the letters nor the points—unless if by chance a clear error is found (for every human makes mistakes)—be it ours, or that of the scribe who has learned from us, or of those who collated, or that of the eye of the one who was dictating which slipped and erred from correct sight.

What Jacob was particularly worried about was that scribes who copied his works would not adhere to his own particular ideas for how words should be correctly spelled, but would instead change his preferred spelling to conform with what was more common.

> In the next place, [scribes] are not to add and insert those letters which we have cut out of names and words or from other parts of speech, not if the names are Hebrew and not even if they are Greek or Roman. They should not write 'Solomon' ܫܠܝܡܘܢ according to their custom, in the place of my own ܫܘܠܡܘܢ. I know quite well what it is I have written...[441]

ܒܛܢܢܐ ܐܘ ܫܚܣܢܐ. ܐܘ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܟܒܪ ܠܗܘܢܐ ܘܦܪܘܫ ܠܗܘܟܠܐ. Phillips' ET can be found on pp. 3-4 and should be used with caution. This Syriac is obscure and parts of my translation should be regarded as tentative.

[441] *A Letter by Mār Jacob Bishop of Edessa on Syriac Orthography* (London, 1869), pp. ܘ – ܗ. ܘܡܢܒܬܪܟܢ ܡܦܩܕ ܐܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܒܝܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܦܫܩܬ ܘܣܝܡܬ: ܕܠܐ ܢܫܠܦܘܢ ܡܢ ܟܝܢܗܘܢ ܒܨܒܝܢ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܥܝܕܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܡܟܬܒ. ܠܐ ܒܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܒܢܘܩܙܐ. ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܡܫܬܟܚ ܐܢ ܕܠܡܐ ܦܘܕܐ ܦܪܝܣܐ ܢܫܬܟܚ: ܡܛܠ ܕܟܠ ܒܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܦܫܥ: ܐܘ ܕܝܠܢ ܐܘ ܕܟܬܘܒܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܠܦ ܡܢܢ: ܐܘ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܦܚܡܘ: ܐܘ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܩܪܘܝܐ ܕܐܬܚܠܠܬ ܘܛܥܬ ܡܢ ܚܙܝܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ: ܒܬܪܟܢ ܕܠܐ ܢܘܣܦܘܢ ܢܥܠܘܢ ܐܬܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܦܣܩܢ ܡܢ ܫܡܗܐ ܘܡܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܫܪܟܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܡܡܠܠܘܬܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܢ ܠܘܬ ܥܒܪ̈ܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܥܒܪ̈ܝܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܢ ܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܪܗܘܡܝܐ. ܠܐ ܢܟܬܒܘܢ ܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܗܘܢ: ܚܠܦ ܫܘܠܡܘܢ ܕܝܠܝ. ܡܕܥ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܡܢܘ ܕܟܬܒܬ. Translation mine, with slight reference to the ET of Phillips in *ibid*., pp. 4-5 (Phillips' translation should be used with caution). The text as it is given in Phillips' edition does not make good sense. In the above, I have followed neither Phillips' variant reading ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܚܠܦ ܕܠܡܐ (taken from BL 7183) nor the ܐܢ ܕܠܡܐ which he prints in the body of the text (taken from BL Add. 12,178). J.P.P. Martin, *Jacobi episcopi Edesseni Epistola ad Gregorium episcopum Sarugensem de orthographia syriaca* (Leipzig, 1869), published the same text based on Vat. Syr. 152, Barberini 7.62 and Paris Syr 142 and in places his text diverges from that of Phillips. Rather than ܐܢ ܕܠܡܐ or ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܚܠܦ ܕܠܡܐ, Martin's text (p. ܝ) reads ܐܠܐ ܕܠܡܐ, which I followed here. I have also followed Martin's ܘܠܐ ܡܢ

Jacob had good reason to worry about scribal copying errors, and not just with respect to his own compositions and translations. He knew from personal experience that faulty texts were circulating and that they led to a confusion in readers that was sometimes simply insoluble given the nature of the manuscript tradition. In Jacob's thirteenth letter written to John the Stylite of Litarb, he takes up a variety of biblical questions which had perplexed John enough to pass them along. One question related to the sisters of King David and Jacob himself had to admit that he had no good answer: 'As for the question about Zeruiah, the mother of Joab and Abishai and Asahel[442] and concerning Abigail, the mother of Amasa bar Jether,'[443] he wrote, 'it comes from textual corruptions which serve as impediments so that there is no answer to it.' Undeterred by the nature of the biblical texts, Jacob still attempted to offer a solution to John's difficulties: he identified two different textual problems lying at their root. The first problem was with John's own Biblical text:

> Nevertheless, for the sake of your repose, O brother, I will not walk away from it empty and silent. Know, therefore, that Zeruiah and Abigail are sisters and that the two of them are the daughters of Jesse and the sisters of King David. As for the textual corruptions which you have in your statement about these women, they are the following. You say that Jether is the father of Amasa, an Israelite man: but he is not an Israelite. Instead, in the place of 'Israelite' (ܐܝܣܪܝܠܝܐ) it is [actually] 'Ishmaelite' (ܐܝܫܡܥܝܠܝܐ)—from the race of Ishmael, the son of Abraham.

In addition to John's personal text being corrupt, there was a more general problem of the Biblical text that everybody possesed having been corrupted by derelict scribes:

ܗ̈ܕܡܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܡܠܠܘܬܐ: ܠܐ ܐܢ ܠܘܬ ܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܐܬܝܗܘܢ ܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܢ ܠܘܬ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܘܪ̈ܘܡܝܐ.
Phillips' subsequently published, *Mār Jacob and Bar Hebraeus on Syriac Accents &c: Appendix III* (London, 1870), contains no material relevant to this passage. I am grateful to David Taylor for alerting me to the existence of Martin's edition of this text as well as *Appendix III*.

[442] cf. 2 Sam. 2:18, 1 Chron. 2:16

[443] cf. 1 Chron. 2:17

> The second textual corruption is one that has been committed by negligent scribes now for a long time. You say about Abigail that she is the mother of Amasa, the daughter of Nahash (ܢܚܫ) when she is [in reality] the daughter of Jesse (ܐܝܫܝ), and you write down 'Nahash' (ܢܚܫ) instead of 'Jesse' (ܐܝܫܝ) on account of the similarity of the words. These are the textual defects which have caused error and uncertainty for you and for this reason it is difficult for you to say that Zeruiah and Abigail are sisters and the daughters of Jesse.[444]

The key for Jacob was in understanding 2 Samuel 17:25 in the light of 1 Chronicles 2:16-17; when he himself sat down to make a revision of the Peshitta translation of 2 Samuel, he emended his text (perhaps following an already harmonized Greek exemplar) along precisely the lines he had suggested to John.[445]

Scribal mistakes could explain other problems as well. John was also interested in whether the Jews were called 'Hebrews' on account of Eber, the son of Shelah. Jacob's answer is in the affirmative:

> I will state it for you in truth: the Jews are called 'Hebrews' on account of Eber, the son of Shelah,[446] for it was from him that Abraham, whom God chose, descended by race. [He descended] also from those who were living in Ur of the Chaldeans, among whom was preserved the first and Adamic language. They were called 'Hebrews' by everybody on account of Eber.

[444] Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), pp. ܟܒ-ܠ. ܫܘܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܛܠ ܡܢ ܨܪܘܝܐ ܐܚܬܗ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܘܕܐܒܝܓܝܠ ܘܕܥܡܫܐ: ܘܡܛܠ ܐܒܝܓܝܠ ܐܡܗ ܕܥܡܫܐ ܒܪ ܝܬܪܐ: ܗܟܢ ܡܦܪܫܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܗ ܡܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ : ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܟܘܢ, ܦܘܫ ܦܬ ܚܟܡܐ. ܒܪܡ ܕܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܢܚܫܐ ܕܐܣܬܟܠܬ. ܐܦܠܐ ܥܫܢ ܐܢܐ ܡܦܫܩܐܝܬ ܘܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ܀ ܕܒ ܡܟܠ ܕܝܢ ܨܪܘܝܐ ܘܐܒܝܓܝܠ ܐܚܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܘܒܢܬܗ ܕܐܝܫܝ ܬܪܬܝܗܝܢ. ܘܐܚܘܬܗ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܡܠܟܐ. ܘܦܪܘܫܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܢܬ ܠܟܘܢ ܒܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܟܠ ܗܠܝܢ. ܗܠܝܢ ܐܚܘܬܗܘܢ. ܐܚܪܝܢ ܐܚܘܬܗ ܕܐܚܘܬܗܘܢ, ܐܬܬܐ ܗܟܘܢ, ܕܐܡܗܬܗܘܢ ܒܪܬܗ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܚܘܬܗܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ, ܐܚܘܬܗܘܢ, ܚܠܦ ܐܡܗܬܗܝܢ. ܡܢ ܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܐܡܗܬܗܝܢ ܒܪ ܐܒܪܗܡ܀ ܦܘܪܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܬܬܪ ܐܢܬ ܠܟܘܢ ܕܟܬܒܝܢ ܠܟܬܒܐ ܡܟܬܒܢܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܙܒܢܐ ܐܪܝܟܐ. ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܗ ܠܐܒܝܓܝܠ ܐܡܗ ܕܥܡܫܐ ܒܪܬܗ ܕܢܚܫ ܒܪ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܒܪܬܗ ܕܐܝܫܝ. ܒܪ ܦܘܚܡ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܢܚܫ ܚܠܦ ܐܝܫܝ. ܡܛܠ ܕܦܚܡܬܐ ܕܒܪܬ ܡܠܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܦܘܪܫܐ ܒܟܪܘ ܠܟܘܢ ܠܛܥܝܘܬܐ ܘܦܘܫܚܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܡܬܥܣܩ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܕܬܐܡܪܘܢ ܕܐܚܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܨܪܘܝܐ ܘܐܒܝܓܝܠ: ܘܒܢܬܗ ܕܐܝܫܝ. ܘܐܚܘܬܗ ܕܕܘܝܕ܀ FT available in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' p. 272.

[445] For these points, see A. Salvesen, *The Books of Samuel in the Syriac Version of Jacob of Edessa* (Leiden, 1999), pp. xiv-xv.

[446] cf. Gen. 10:24

There were, however, false etymologies of the name 'Hebrew' floating around, and Jacob traced these back to a defective manuscript tradition of the Bible. Jews were called Hebrews because of Eber,

> it was not because of the fact that Abraham crossed over the Euphrates, as some fatuous person made up and handed down, having come to this by means of a textual corruption in the Greek Scripture, since he saw that it was written in the Scripture 'Abraham the περατής,'[447] that is, 'one who crosses over,' from the fact that he crossed the Euphrates River.[448]

Jacob, in fact, believed that many names in the Bible had been changed and corrupted, a view which he puts forth in his fourteenth letter to John of Litarb, where he takes up a number of Biblical questions which John has put foward. The fourth of these questions revolved around the issue of whether the Philip who baptized the eunuch of the Candace and who taught the Samaritans in Acts 8 was Philip the Apostle or another Philip, a deacon; Jacob argues that it was in fact Philip, a deacon and not the Apostle. In the course of the discussion, Jacob refers to the Eunuch's master as 'the Candace, the Queen of the region of Sheba,'[449] and once he has finished his argument about Philip's identity, he takes up the issue of how he has referred to the Queen. 'Do not marvel,' he tells John,

> that it is the 'Candace, the Queen of Sheba' that I have called her and not the 'Queen of the Ethiopians'[450] like the Holy Scripture does. It is so that I might

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[447] Gen. 14:13

[448] Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), pp. ܟܐ – ܟܛ . ܘܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܘ ܥܒܪܐܝܬ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܠܐܒܪ̈ܐ ܗܘ ܒܪ ܥܠܝܐ ܡܬܦܢܝܢ ܢ̈ܗܪܐ ܒܒܪ̈ܝܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢܗ ܢܦܩܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܡܫܟܢܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܗܘ ܕ ܒܚܒܐ ܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ: ܘܡܢ ܗܘܢ ܕܡܥܒܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܐܘܪ ܗܝ ܕܒ̈ܠܕܝܐ: ܗܘܢ ܕܠܗܬܘܢ ܢܦܠܘ ܗܘܐ ܠܥܒܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܘܐܕܡܝܐ: ܘܡܬܬܚܡܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܢ ܟܠܢܫܐ ܒܒܪ̈ܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܒܐܒܪ: ܘܠܘ ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܒܒܪ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܦܪܬ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܪܐ ܒܪܐ ܘܐܫܠܡ. ܒܕ ܡܢ ܦܘܪܣܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ ܠܗܕܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܚܙܐ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܦܪܐܛܝܣ ܐܘ ܒܝܬ ܒܥܒܪܐ: ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܒܐܡܬܐ ܕܥܒܪ ܢܗܪܐ ܦܪܬ ❖ FT available in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' p. 273.

[449] See BL Add., 12,172: ܦܝܠܝܦܘܣ ܗܘ ܕܐܥܡܕ. ܠܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܠܗܘܢ, ܗܘܐ ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܩܢܕܩܐ ܡܠܟܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܐܬܪܐ ܕܫܒܐ

[450] Lit., 'Cushites,' ܟܘ̈ܫܝܐ

> make known to you these things which are unknown to you. Indeed, many things like these are to be found in the Divine Books, in which names and words have been changed—not only in terms of the manner of speaking [about them], but also in the scripture, which even itself wants to speak in a customary manner.

The Bible, therefore, contains information which is strictly speaking, inaccurate, because when referring to people and places, it communicates in the way which conforms to the norms and customs of the world in which it was written. In Jacob's letter on orthography, as we have seen, he gave rigorous orders that scribes not follow their customary ways of writing certain words and adhere to Jacob's own spelling choices. In the case of the Eunuch of Acts 8, it becomes clear why this is the case: when scribes and authors follow custom and habit when writing their texts, it introduces problems. Jacob, who in his life would burn a book of canon law at the gate of the patriarchal monastery in angry protest against the hierarchy's insouciance at the laws' lax observation,[451] was a person scrupulous in his attention to detail and accuracy. 'Know therefore what I am saying to you,' he continues

> and pay attention: in the regions of the Ethiopians it has never been heard of nor have there ever been written stories handed down that a woman has ruled in their land. But, in the regions of Sheba, as the histories report, from the earliest time a woman has ruled over them—the daughter of Sheba, their first father. Even in the time of Solomon, the King of Israel, a woman was ruling over them—and she came to him, as it is written. Moreover, in the stories about Alexander the king of the Greeks, it is written that he went to the Candace, the Queen of Sheba. From this, therefore, it is known that that believing official who had come to pray in Jerusalem was from the Queen of Sheba and not from the Queen of the Ethiopians, even if the name [of the place] was different [in the Bible], for the prevailing custom at that time was to call all those who were by color black 'Ethiopians.'[452]

[451] See J.-B. Chabot, ed. *Chronique de Michel le syrien, patriarche jacobite de Antioche (1166-1199)* (Paris, 1899-1910), vol. 4 (Syriac) 445-446, vol. 2 (FT) 472. See also, J.-B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, edd. and trans. *Gregorii Barhebraei: Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* (Louvain, 1893), vol. 1 cols. 290-291.

[452] BL Add. 12,172, fol. 122b: ܕܦܪܢܣܬܗ̇ ܕܝܢ ܠܡܬܐܡܪ ܗܘ̣ ܡ̈ܠܟܬܐ ܕܫܒܐ ܘܠܐ ܡ̈ܠܟܬܐ ܕܟܘܫܝ̈ܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܥܠܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ: ܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܐܘܪܚܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܢܩܪܘܢ ܠܗ. ܠܐ ܬܬܕܡܪ. ܗܟܢܐܝܬܐ ܒܪ ܕܐܝܟܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܩܕܡܝ̈ܬܐ ܒܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ: ܕܐܬܚܠܦܘ ܒܗܘܢ ܫܡܗ̈ܐ ܘܡ̈ܠܐ ܠܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܡܡܠܠܐ ܕܡܡܠܠܐ: ܐܠܐ ܒܗ̇ ܐܦ ܒܟܬܒܐ: ܗܘ

As someone who was bilingual and who had studied the Bible closely in both Greek and Syriac, Jacob's comments about the many names in Scripture being changed according to custom could have, in fact, been a recognition of the 'updating' of place names which I have mentioned above as a characteristic of the Peshitta translation.

Nevertheless, Jacob's view that the writers of Scripture or scribes copying manuscripts might alter the text or corrupt it so that it was no longer precisely accurate extended beyond place names. In the same fourteenth letter to John of Litarb, Jacob next takes up the question of whether Mary had a true, physical sister, as suggested by John 19:25—which reported that standing near the Cross were Jesus' mother and the sister of his mother—and his answer is emphatic: 'it was not the case that the Holy Virgin had a fleshly sister—one should in no way think or suppose this, for she was utterly without a fleshly brother or sister!'[453] Jacob argues that one Mary present at the Cross was the Holy and Blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus, while the other Mary an old woman, the wife of Joseph and the mother of the men thought to be the brothers of Jesus (Simon, Joses, Jacob, Judah). This Mary was called the sister of the Virgin Mary 'on account of great love and also because they were thought by everybody to be the wives of Joseph and the two of them were called as such.' Here Jacob introduces again the argument from customary speech in order to explain the

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ܕܐܝܟ ܒܣܪܐ ܝ݂ ܠܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܡܠܠ܀ ܕܒ ܗܟܢܠ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ. ܘܩܕܡ ܒܠܝܢ. ܕܒܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܒܡܫܝܚܐ.
ܠܐ ܡܬܬܘܡ ܐܬܬܩܢܬ ܐܘ ܐܬܠܡ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ: ܕܐܡܠܟܬ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܒܐܪܥܗܘܢ. ܒܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ
ܕܫܒܝܐ: ܐܡܪܝܢܢ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܪܒܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ: ܐܡܠܟܬ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܒܠܥܘܕܝ. ܒܪܬܗ ܕܠܘܛ ܕܫܒܝܐ
ܐܒܗܘܗܝ ܗܘ ܩܕܡܝܐ. ܘܐܦ ܒܪܝܢܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܡܘܪܝܐ. ܐܢܬܬܐ ܡܡܠܟܐ ܗܘܬ ܒܠܥܘܕܝ. ܗܝ
ܕܐܦ ܕܐܬܬ ܠܘܬܗ ܒܠܡܢ. ܬܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܒܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܛܠ ܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܘܣ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ. ܕܠܘܬ ܡܟܐܕܐܝܡ
ܡܠܟܬܐ ܕܫܒܝܐ ܒܠܥܘܕܝ ܕܐܬܠ. ܐܡܪܝܢܐ ܒܢܬ ܕܐܦ ܡܢܗ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܕܝܢ. ܕܡܠܟܬܐ ܕܫܒܝܐ ܬܬܐܡܪ ܕܐܬܬܘܗܝ، ܗܘܐ
ܫܠܝܛܐ ܗܘ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ: ܕܐܬܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܬܡܢ ܠܗ ܒܐܘܪܫܠܡ. ܘܠܐ ܕܡܠܟܬܐ ܕܒܫܒܝܐ: ܐܦ ܡܒܠܥ ܫܡܥܐ: ܡܛܠ
ܒܠܬ ܕܐܝܬܝ ܗܘܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ: ܕܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܐܘܟܡܝܢ ܒܓܘܢܗܘܢ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܒܫܒܝܐ܀

[453] BL Add. 12,172, fol. 122b: ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܚܬܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܬܐ ܠܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܕܘܩ
ܠܗ ܠܡܣܒܪ ܕܢܬܚܫܒ ܐܘ ܕܢܣܒܪ ܗܕܐ ܗܟܝܠ: ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܐܚܐ ܐܘ ܚܬܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܬܐ ܒܟܠ ܟܠܗ

difficulty presented by the text: 'This was the reason that this woman is called the sister of his Mother—from habit—and John made use of it out of custom and wrote of her that she was "the sister of His mother."'[454] The same argument surfaces in Jacob's scholia on the Old Testament. How is it possible that God could both repent that He had made Saul King (1 Sam. 15:11) and yet at the same time it not be possible for God to repent or for the gifts of God to be subject to repentance (cf. Romans 11:29)? This apparent tension only exists for those who take the words of the Scripture too literally. We need to understand that God was accomodating himself to human speech:

> ...what is the intent of this human passage which is written: 'God repented,'—like one who is mutable, when He is in truth immutable—'because he had made Saul King over Israel'? Indeed, the Divine Scripture speaks according to human custom, because it is spoken to humans and because of their obtuseness and the inability of their minds... and as for 'He repented for having made Saul king': when we consider [them] intelligently, these do not indicate to us that God changed and afterwards repented; instead, [they mean] that, having condescended, He acts and speaks, in every instant and in all eventualities, only in accordance with the ability of our weakness, pardoning the stupidity of our childishness and providing us with salvation...[455]

A passage in the book of Ecclesiastes ('All his friends and companions went around in the streets with weeping and wailing while mourning, and with suffering and pain,

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[454] BL Add. 12,172, fols., 122b-123a: ܗܕܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܘܬ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܚܬܐ ܕܐܡܗ ܕܝܫܘܥ. ܡܛܠ ܗ̇ܝ ܒܥܝܕܐ ܕܐܦ ܗ̇ܝ، ܠܡܥܝܕܘܬܐ ܒܥܝܕܐ ܕܐܦ ܗ̇ܝ، ܡܥܢܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ̇ ܡܛܠ ܚܣܝܐ ܡܫܒܚܐ: ܘܐܦ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܡܢ ܥܠܝܡ ܢܫܐ ܕܐܘܡܦ ܡܫܬܠܡܢ ܗܘ، ܘܡܬܬܐܡܪܢ ܬܪܬܝܗܝܢ. ܗܕܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܘܬ ܥܠܬܐ ܕܐܬܬܐܡܪܬ ܗܕܐ ܚܬܐ ܕܐܡܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܥܝܕܐ: ܘܐܦ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܐܬܚܫܚ ܒܗ ܒܥܝܕܐ: ܘܟܬܒܗ̇ ܚܬܐ ܕܐܡܗ܀ Jacob also suggests that a third Mary, the wife of Clopas, the brother of Joseph, lived in the same house as these two Marys.

[455] Phillips, ed. and trans. *Scholia on Passages of the Old Testament by Mār Jacob*, p. ܝܕ. ܡܢܐ ܗ̱ܝ ܒܥܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܐܢܫܝܬܐ ܕܟܬܝܒܐ: ܕܐܬܬܘܝ ܐܠܗܐ، ܐܝܟ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܐ: ܟܕ ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ: ܡܛܠ ܕܐܡܠܟܗ ܠܫܐܘܠ ܥܠ ܐܝܣܪܐܝܠ. ܕܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܢܫܝܐ: ܡܡܠܠ ܐܦ ܟܬܒܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܠܘܬ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܡܬܡܠܠ: ܘܡܛܠ ܥܒܝܘܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܫܘܫܛܐ ܕܬܪܥܝܬܗܘܢ ... ܘܕܐܬܬܘܝ ܥܠ ܕܐܡܠܟܗ ܠܫܐܘܠ. ܗܠܝܢ ܠܘ ܕܐܫܬܚܠܦ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܐܬܬܘܝ، ܡܠܦܢ ܡܬܒܩܝܢ ܠܢ ܟܕ ܡܬܚܟܡܝܢ ܗܟܠܬܐܝܬ: ܐܠܐ ܕܠܦܘܬ ܫܘܫܛܐ ܕܚܝܠܢ ܘܡܬܚܢܢܐܝܬ ܟܕ ܡܬܪܟܢ: ܥܒܕ ܘܡܡܠܠ ܒܟܠܙܒܢ ܘܒܟܠ ܣܘܥܪܢܝܢ: ܟܕ ܚܣܐ ܥܠ ܣܟܠܘܬܐ ܕܫܒܪܘܬܢ ܘܡܬܦܪܢܣ ܠܢ ܦܘܪܩܢܐ.. My translation. The ET of Phillips in *ibid.*, pp. 23-24 should be used with caution.

they groaned and lamented his death'[456]) is explained by recourse to customary speech: 'He said these things,' Jacob writes in a scholion preserved in the famous catena of the Edessene monk Severos, 'according to the custom of the ancients, who would mourn for many days over one who had passed away.'[457] God's words to Cain after the murder of Abel and Cain's response to God, Jacob explains in another scholion, were never really spoken at all. 'This story concerning Cain,' he notes,

> is entirely literal and in our custom of speaking and stated using personification. For God did not speak one of these words to Cain; neither did Cain respond to God with one of these [words] which are written. It is rather the case that the aim of these words is to demonstrate the evil mind of Cain and the sentence of judgment which went forth against him from God on account of the abundance of his evil-doing...[458]

Why, Jacob asks in his *Commentary* on the Pentateuch, did God make an oath to Abraham by cutting animals in half and passing between them as Genesis 15 reports? We have, once again, an example of God accommodating himself to customary human forms of communication. 'Indeed,' Jacob writes,

> the custom held among humans at that time that when they sought to confirm oaths with one another, they would divide an animal and pass between the parts carrying torches and establish a firm covenant. For this reason, the Lord spoke these words to Abraham, to confirm his intention, that He would give him a son.[459]

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[456] NB: This lemma only matches part of Ecclesiastes 12:5. For the Syriac text, see BL Add. 12,144, fol. 122b: ܘܐܬܟܪܒܘ ܒܥܘܡܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ، ܟܠܗܘܢ ܘܡܬܒܟܝܢܗܘܢ، ܟܡ ܒܟܝܐ ܘܐܠܠܝܬܐ ܒܗ ܡܬܘܡܝܢ. ܘܒܟܝܐ ܘܒܟܝܬܐ ܐܒܝܠܘ ܘܐܬܬܢܚܘ ܥܠ ܡܘܬܗ

[457] BL Add. 12,144, fol. 122b: ܗܠܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܩܕܡܝܐ: ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܡܬܐܒܠܝܢ ܝܘܡܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܗܘܘ ܡܬܐܒܠܝܢ ܥܠ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܐܙܠ

[458] BL Add. 17,193, fols. 61a-61b: ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܩܐܝܢ. ܕܟܠܗ̇ ܦܫܝܩܬܐ ܗܝ، ܘܒܥܝܕܐ ܕܡܡܠܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܠܗ̇. ܘܒܦܪܨܘܦܘܬܐ ܦܪܝܫ ܘܡܐ ܐܡܝܪܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܩܐܝܢ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ. ܐܦ ܠܐ ܩܐܝܢ ܦܢܝ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒܢ. ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܢܝܫܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܢܚܘܐ ܬܪܥܝܬܗ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܕܩܐܝܢ. ܘܦܣܩܐ ܕܕܝܢܐ ܕܢܦܩ ܥܠܘܗܝ، ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ: ܡܛܠ ܣܘܓܐܐ ܕܒܝܫܘܬܗ

[459] Mingana 147, fol. 8a: ܘܡܛܠܒܝܐ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܗܟܢܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܠܐܒܪܗܡ ܥܕܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܗܝܕܝܢ: ܕܟܕ ܕܒܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܢܫܪܪܘܢ ܡܘܡ̈ܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܚܕ̈ܕܐ: ܦܠܓܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܚܝܘܬܐ ܘܥܒܪܝܢ ܒܝܬ ܦ̈ܠܓܘܬܗ. ܟܕ ܛܥܝܢ ܠܡܦܐܕܐ ܘܩܝܡܝܢ ܩܝܡܐ ܠܗ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܠܡܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܡܪܝܐ ܠܐܒܪܗܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܢܫܪܪ ܬܪܥܝܬܗ ܕܢܬܠ ܠܗ ܒܪܐ܀

In addition to errors in the Biblical text which resulted from sloppy scribal work, there were statements in the Scripture which were, when judged factually, inaccurate and wrong even if they had been properly transmitted by copyists. These types of errors were the result of God speaking to humans in terms that they could actually discern and understand.

Jacob was not alone in that the error of a scribe or some sort of other agenda on the part of the author might result in a text or manuscript which taken at face value was in fact misleading. His friend and fellow philhellene George of the Arabs might also refer to such behavior when he himself was dealing with some sort of textual problem. In a letter written in 714, George, would explain an inaccurate quotation of the text of 1 Corinthians 15:44 by Aphrahat by suggesting that 'He [Aphrahat] said, 'it is buried,' instead of 'it is sown,' either because he was following a manuscript which he had with him at that time or perhaps he sought to change the phrase (λέξις) in accordance with his aim.'[460] A scholion by Ḥunayn in Galen's *De Anatomicis Administrationibus* shows a similar logic at work, this time, however, applied in the realm of a secular text. 'Ḥunayn said,' the scholion begins,

> 'We have found in three Greek manuscripts which we have come across up to this point—with the exception of the Syriac manuscript—that, according to what we find Galen says after a little bit, "This middle part is not cartiligenous, but is rather bony." If that is so, then one of two things must be the case: it must either be an error of the scribe or there must be a person who supposed that he was fixing the text and so changed it and corrupted it.'[461]

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[460] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 251a, (7.4.3 in my edition): ܗܘ ܗܿܝ ܕܡܬܩܒܪ ܚܠܦ ܗܿܝ ܕܡܙܕܪܥ ܐܡܪ. ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܨܚܚܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܘܬܗ. ܐܘ ܕܗܘ ܒܥܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܫܚܠܦܝܗ̇ ܠܠܟܣܝܣ ܠܘܬ ܢܝܫܐ ܗܿܘ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ.

[461] M. Simon, ed., *Sieben Bücher Anatomie des Galen. ΑΝΑΤΟΜΙΚΩΝ ΕΓΧΕΙΡΗΣΕΩΝ ΒΙΒΛΙΟΝ Θ-ΙΕ*, vol. 1, (Leipzig, 1906), pp. 118-119, For this quote, see Strohmaier, 'Hunayn b. Ishak as a Philologist,' *Ephrem-Hunayn Festival* (Baghdad, 1974), p. 541. For *De Anatomicis Administrationibus* as the Latin title of *Fī 'ilāj al-tashrīḥ*, see Meyerhof, 'New Light,' p. 693. According to Ḥunayn, this book was translated into Syriac by Job of Edessa and later improved by Ḥunayn; see Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 20 (Arabic) (no. 21).

For George, invoking scribal corruption was a strategy to be used in dealing with Bible difficulties. The omission of the names of Ahazia, Joash and Amuzia in Matthew's genealogy of Christ could be explained away with reference to scribal actions which had an unhappy effect on the text. 'George of the Nations,' Dionysios bar Salibi (d. 1171) reports in his *Commentary on the Gospels*,

> says that Matthew was not silent about these three persons, nor did he change the number of generations and state 14 [generations] instead of 17. Instead, because he wrote his Gospel for the Jews, most of whom were conversant in the Greek language, they wanted to translate it from Hebrew to Greek—and the Greek language is unable to pronounce *ḥet*, *'e*, *ṣāde* like the Hebrew and Syriac languages, [in fact,] it does not even have deep guttural letters in its alphabet. When the translators came to Joram (ܝܘܪܡ), they said that he begat Ahazia (ܐܚܙܝܐ) and that this one begat Joash (ܝܘܐܫ) and this one [begat] Amuzia (ܐܡܘܨܝ ܐ) and Amuzia (ܐܡܘܨܝ ܐ) Uzia (ܥܘܙܝܐ). They wanted to write the names in Greek and wrote that Joram begat Οχοζιαν (ܐܟܘܙܝܐ) and Οχοζιας (ܐܟܘܙܝܐ) [begat] Ιωαν (ܝܘܐܣ) and Ιωας (ܝܘܐܣ) [begat] Ομοσιαν (ܐܡܘܣܝܐ) and Ομοσιας (ܐܡܘܣܝܐ) [begat] Οσιαν (ܐܘܣܝܐ). When others after them came to write the Gospel in Greek, they skipped over the passage 'Joram begat Οχοζιαν (ܐܟܘܙܝܐ) [i.e., Ahazia (ܐܚܙܝܐ)] and wrote that Joram begat Οζιαν (ܐܘܙܝܐ) [i.e., Uzia (ܥܘܙܝܐ)] on account of the similarity of the names and their differing only in the letter *kāph*. They did this unintentionally perhaps, or intentionally so that the line of generations would add up to 14 for them because the numbers seven and fourteen were greatly beloved to those who believed from the Jews. So in this way were corrupted manuscripts handed down to all the nations.[462]

See also Ḥunayn's scholion in Simon, *Sieben Bücher Anatomie des Galen*, p. 117, 'Ḥunayn said: As for this passage (*kalām*)—that is, his statement which is written down, "in what is among these things," —we have found it in a certain Greek manuscript connected to the passage concerning the muscle. If it is shifted to another language, it must be placed later and be after the statement, "I first saw the muscles of the tongue," and the place of his statement (which is the one written down) is taken by what is set down (i.e., "the muscles of the tongue,"). I believe the manuscript on the basis of which I translated is more correct."

[462] I. Sedlaček and J.B. Chabot, *Dionysii bar Ṣalībī: Commentarii in Evangelia* (CSCO, series 2: SS 98) (Paris, 1906), pp. 38-39: ܓܘܪܓ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܐܡܪ: ܕܡܬܝ ܠܐ ܫܬܩ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ . ܓ. ܦܪ̈ܨܘܦܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܚܘܫܒܐ ܕܫܪ̈ܒܬܐ ܫܚܠܦ ܘܐܡܪ .ܝܕ. ܚܠܦ .ܝܙ. ܐܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܠܝܗܘ̈ܕܝܐ ܟܬܒܗ ܠܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܘܗܘܘ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܡܦܩܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܒܥܘ ܕܡܢ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܠܝܘܢܝܐ ܢܦܩܘܢܝܗܝ.. ܘܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܕܢܐܡܪ ܚܝܬ .ܥܐ. ܨ̈ܕܐ. ܐܝܟ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܘܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܬܘܬܐ ܓܪ̈ܓܪܝܬܐ ܥܡܝ̈ܩܬܐ ܒܐܠܦܒܝܬܗ. ܕܡܬܪ̈ܓܡܢܐ. ܟܕ ܐܬܘ ܡܦܩܢܐ ܠܘܬ ܝܘܪܡ. ܘܐܡܪܘ ܕܐܘܠܕ ܠܐܚܙܝܐ. ܘܗܢܐ ܠܝܘܐܫ. ܘܗܢܐ ܠܐܡܘܨܝ ܐ. ܘܐܡܘܨܝ ܐ ܠܥܘܙܝܐ. ܗܘܘ ܒܥܝܢ ܕܢܟܬܒܘܢ ܠܫ̈ܡܗܐ ܝܘܢܐܝܬ. ܘܟܬܒܘ ܕܝܘܪܡ ܐܘܠܕ ܠܐܟܘܙܝܐ. ܘܐܟܘܙܝܐ ܠܝܘܐܣ. ܘܝܘܐܣ ܠܐܡܘܣܝܐ. ܘܐܡܘܣܝܐ ܠܐܘܣܝܐ. ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܒܬܪܗܘܢ ܟܕ ܐܬܘ ܕܢܟܬܒܘܢܝܗܝ ܠܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܝܘܢܐܝܬ. ܫܘܪܘ ܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܝܘܪܡ ܐܘܠܕ ܠܐܟܘܙܝܐ. ܘܟܬܒܘ ܕܝܘܪܡ ܐܘܠܕ ܠܐܘܙܝܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܕܡܝܘܬ ܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܘܦܘܪܫܢܗܘܢ ܕܒܚܕܐ ܐܬܘܬܐ ܕܟܦ. ܘܗܕܐ ܥܒܕܘ ܥܒܕ ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܨܒܝܢܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܨܒܝܢܗܘܢ. ܡܛܠ ܗܝ ܕܢܫܬܠܡܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ

The critical attitude, however, that Syriac-speaking scholars adopted towards texts covered more than just a concern for manuscript errors and other problems in transmission—in other words, more than just textual or 'lower' criticism. There was also keen interest in issues of authorship and authenticity—'higher' criticism. It is to this issue that I now turn.

Manuscripts in search of an Author

In the *Risāla*, Ḥunayn shows a concern for identifying the authentic works of Galen. On six different occassions, he points out a work attributed to Galen which is actually masquerading falsely under the name of the great doctor or which he is unsure about being authentically Galenic.[463] In his entry no. 34, *On The Anatomy of the Instruments of the Voice*, for example, Ḥunayn notes that the work 'is forged in the language of Galen and is neither from Galen nor from someone else among the Ancients. Instead, it is from one of the Moderns who assembled it from the books of Galen. And the one who assembled it, in addition to this, was weak.'[464] In addition to the *Risāla*, Ḥunayn has left us a short work which deals with works of Galen not

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ܘܡܠܬܐ ܕܐܬܪܥܬܐ .ܝܕ.. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܟܢ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܗܘܐ ܒܣܦܪܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܘ.ܝܕ.. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܢ ܡܣܩܪܢܐ.
ܘܗܟܢܐ ܐܬܡܠܝܬ ܒܝܘܢܝܐ ܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܠܘܬ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ, my translation, but with reference to the ET of W. Cureton in *ibid.*, *Remains of a Very Antient Recension of the Four Gospels in Syriac Hitherto Unknown in Europe; Discovered, Edited, and Translated* (London, 1858), p. x. I am grateful to Joseph Witztum for passing these references to me. This opinion is also cited in the *Commentary* on Matthew of Syrian Orthodox Patriarch George Be'eltan (d. ca. 790) in Vat. Syr. 154, and translated by Ryssel, *Gedichte und Briefe*, p. 140: 'Und Georg sagt, Auch dies ist ein Irrtum des Abschreibers; andere Leute aber sagen....'. Also, in discussing the problems surrounding the genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1:8, Bar Hebraeus notes that George of the Arabs 'says that the original scribe erred by reason of the similarity of the letters and instead of that which had been written—Ahaziah—wrote Uzziah.' Translation W.E.W. Carr, *Gregory Abu'l Faraj commonly called Bar-Hebraeus. Commentary on the Gospels from the Horreum Mysteriorum* (London, 1925), p. 6. Syriac text (p. 3): ܘܓܘܪܓܝ ܠܗ ܕܩܕܡܝܐ ܐܡܪ ܕܟܬܘܒܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܛܥܐ ܒܕܡܘܬ ܐܬܘܬܐ ܘܚܠܦ ܗܝ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܐܚܙܝܐ ܥܘܙܝܐ ܟܬܒ

[463] Cf. Meyerhof, 'New Light on Ḥunain ibn Isḥâq and His Period,' p. 721.

[464] Bergsträsser, *Ḥunain ibn Isḥāq*, p. 23 (Arabic text), p. 18 (GT), also with reference to *idem.*, *Neue Materialien*, p. 18. This is *Vocalium Instrumentorum Dissectio* (Meyerhof, 'New Light on Ḥunain ibn Isḥâq and His Period,' p. 694).

mentioned in his πίναξ;[465] in this treatise, Ḥunayn takes up the question of inauthentic books of Galen, rejecting some books as falsely attributed based on their style or their ideas.[466] He also offers suggestions as to why some books have been claimed incorrectly as Galenic: they might be compilations of Galenic material, or attempts by people to pass off their own work under Galen's name, or simply a result of incompetence—people thinking that the author of the first work in a manuscript was the author of all the works it contained.[467] Ḥunayn had a very keen critical eye: his judgements about the authenticity of various works of Galen differ little from the assessments of modern philologists.[468]

As with other elements we find in Ḥunayn, this concern with authenticity and the critical evaluation of works is another characteristic of the Syriac scholarly tradition before him. The seventeen letters written by Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite of Litarb, for example, are full of discussion of such matters—not with respect to Galenic works, but rather with respect to Biblical and other religious compositions. The concern Jacob and John show takes several forms. The first and most basic is one

[465] See M. Meyerhof, 'Über echte und unechte Schriften Galens, nach arabischen Quellen,' *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften. Philosophisch-Historische Klasse* 28 (1928), p. 533.

[466] cf. Meyerhof, 'Über echte und unechte Schriften Galens, nach arabischen Quellen,' p. 539, 'Die Bücher, welche wir mit dem Namen des Galens bezeichnet gefunden haben, ohne daß die Beredsamkeit (Eleganz) ihrer Sprache derjenigen des Galenos gleicht, noch die Kraft ihrer Ideen denen, sind folgende…'

[467] cf. Meyerhof, 'Über echte und unechte Schriften Galens, nach arabischen Quellen,' p. 539: 'Ferner haben wir noch andere Schriften vorgefunden, welche mit dem Namen der Galenos bezeichet, aber nicht von ihm sind, sondern aus seiner Schriften kompiliert und von anderen Autoren verfaßt und noch ihm benannt sind; einige davon waren schon vor Galenos verfaßt worden und sind von anderen mit dem Namen Galens bezeichnet worden: entweder weil der verfasser gern seinen Besitz an galenischen Schriften um solche vermehren wollte, welche andere nicht besaßen, oder wegen des Kritiklosigkeit, welche eine unveränderliche Eigenschaftliche Eigenschaft der Törichten ist, so daß sie, wenn sie in einer Schrift(rolle) mehrere Bücher finden, und sie im ersten derselben den Namen irgendeines Menschen (Verfassers) antreffen, sie denken, daß die übrigen Bücher von dem gleichen Mann seien. Daher finden wir so häufig Bücher des Rouphos in Schriften, welche mit dem Namen des Galenos bezeichnet sind, wie z.B. die Abhandlung über den Theriak (oder über Gelbsucht).'

[468] See Meyerhof's comments in 'Über echte und unechte Schriften Galens, nach arabischen Quellen,' p. 541.

which wanted to know who the author was of a certain book. Did Moses write the book of Job, John inquires at one point? Jacob's answer is short and straightforward—yes.[469] David, Jacob writes in another place, was not the author of all the Psalms: there were other authors as well: Asaph, Ethan the Ezrahite, Heman, Moses, Jeremiah, Solomon, and Jeduthun, in addition to others whose names were not recorded.[470] The author of the Quqite hymns was not Mar Jacob of Pesilta, or anybody else named 'Mar Jacob' for that matter, but was rather a deacon called Simeon Quqāyā, a potter from the village of Gāshīr who lived in the time of Philoxenos.[471] The poet Isaac of Antioch is actually three different Isaacs: one from Amīd who was a disciple of Mar Ephrem and who lived in the time of the Emperor Arkadios, another one from Edessa who lived at the time of Zeno who wrote a homily about a man he came across in Antioch with a parrot named ψιτακκός (lit. 'Parrot') that was trained to recite the longer version of the Trisagion, and a third and final Isaac, also from Edessa, who lived at the time of the Bishop Paul and who initially was a believer (i.e., a Miaphysite) but eventually became a Chalcedonian and wrote *memre* which contained Chalcedonian theology.[472] And of course, Jacob and John were not alone in their interest in authorship. George, Bishop of the Arabs, Jacob's friend, wrote a letter to a recluse name Joshua in AD 714 in which he

[469] 'Since you also added this in your questions: was this book of Job written by Moses? Concerning this will I respond with a short brief statement: thus we have received from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church.' Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), pp. ܠܐ – ܠܒ. ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܐܘܣܦܬ ܒܗ ܒܫܘܐܠܝܟ: ܕܐܢ ܠܡܘܫܐ ܟܬܝܒ ܗܘܐ ܗܢܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܝܘܒ: ܘܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܦܢܝܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܗ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܩܠܝܠܬܐ ܘܦܣܝܩܬܐ. ܕܗܟܢܐ ܩܒܠܢ ܡܢ ܐܒܗܬܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ܀ FT in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' p. 261. See also the short treatise on the authorship of Job attributed to Jacob in Mingana 147, fol. 36b.

[470] W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), p. ܢ. FT in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' pp. 272-273.

[471] See BL Add. 12,172, fols. 121b-122a. Most of the portion of the fourteenth letter from Jacob to John the Stylite relating to the delightful story of Simeon the Potter is printed in W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London, 1870), pp. 602-603.

[472] BL Add. 12,172, fols. 123a-123b.

responded to a question about the authorship of the *Demonstrations* of Aphrahat (whom he referred to as 'the Persian Sage') by meticulously combing through their contents in order to glean all the information he could about the author's identity, place of living, and time period;[473] perhaps as an indication of its quality, George's work on the identity of Aphrahat is cited by modern editors in their introductions to editions of the *Demonstrations*.[474]

Jacob's view of the authenticity of a source would influence his view of its validity. It was not lawful, he noted in a canon on sorcerers, for a cleric or a layman to take for himself an answer from the book which is called 'The Lot of the Apostles:' this work was not in fact from the Apostles. Those who violated Jacob's rule were to be held back from the sacraments.[475] John wrote to Jacob apparently referring to extra-biblical

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[473] BL Add. 12,154, fols. 245b-248b (sections 7.2.1-7.2.10 in my edition). This is George's fourth letter. The part of the letter deals with the identity of 'the Persian Sage.' Parts two and three also deal with aspects of the *Demonstrations*.

[474] See e.g., W. Wright, *The Homilies of Aphraates, The Persian Sage* (London, 1869), pp. 3-4, 8. With his edition, Wright also published the first three sections of George's Letter 4 (see *ibid*., pp. 19-37); cf. also, I. Parisot, *Patrologia Syriaca*, vol. 1, (Paris, 1894), pp. X, XII-XIII, XIV, XVI-XVII. J. Forget, *De Vita et scriptis Aphraatis, Sapientis Persae, dissertatio historico-theologica* (Louvain, 1882), pp. 1-55, began his work on Aphrahat by publishing George's Letter 4.

[475] *Nomocanon*, ed., Bedjan, p. 101: 'Concerning Sorcerers: Jacob of Edessa. It is not lawful for a cleric or a layman to receive for himself an answer from a certain book, and neither from that which is called "The Lot of the Apostles," in that it is not of them. Otherwise, let him be held back from the mysteries.' ܥܠ ܚܪ̈ܫܐ: ܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ: ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܠܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܐܘ ܠܥܠܡܝܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܡܕܡ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܦܣܐ ܕܫܠܝܚ̈ܐ. ܒܕܠܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܐܠܐ: ܢܬܟܠܐ ܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ. For other versions of this rule, see *ibid*., pp. 111-112; C. Kayser, *Die Canones Jakob's von Edessa* (Leipzig, 1886), pp. 2, 21 (Syriac). A shorter version can also be found in A. Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I*, (CSCO 367: SS 161) (Louvain, 1975), p. 268, with ET in *idem.*, trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 244. My ET made with slight reference to that of Vööbus. The longest version of this canon occurs in the collection of Jacob's canons in Mardin 310, fols. 202a-202b: ܐܕܝ. ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܐܘ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ ܠܡܣܒ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܐܘ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܐܘ ܠܐܚܪܢ ܐܢܫ. ܐܢ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܦܣܐ ܕܫܠܝܚ̈ܐ. ܐܘ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܕ. ܐܘ ܐܦܢ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܗܘ. ܐܘ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ. ܡܢܐ ܦܠܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܒܐܝܕܝܗܘܢ ܡܬܢܣܒ: ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܗ ܠܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܒܟܠ ܟܠܗ: ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܦܣܐ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܫܠܝܚ̈ܐ: ܐܠܐ ܕܓܒܝܐ ܘܕܙܠܝܠܘܬܗܘܢ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܕ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܝܟ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܒܕ ܗܕܐ. ܐܢ ܡܢ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ: ܘܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܣ ܕܢܝܚ ܡܢ ܫܡܫܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ. ܕܢܦܠ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗ ܙܕܩ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܘܕܪܝܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܦ ܕܪܓܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ. ܙܕܩ ܕܟܡ ܗܝ ܕܢܦܠ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗ. ܐܦ ܡܢ ܥܘܡܘܬܐ ܢܬܦܪܫ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܢܕܝܪܐ. ܡܟܝܠ ܐܦ ܟܠܡܝܐ 'Addai: Whether it is right for a clergyman or a monk to take an answer, either for himself or for another person, either from that which is called 'The

stories which stated that Lot had additional people in his family. For Jacob, such statements were 'full of foolishness' and he refused to accept them: they had not been handed down by Moses.[476] In a scholion on the Nephilim of Genesis 6:1-4, Jacob cites 'stories (which are) old and (are) additional to those which are (found) among the Hebrews' about their destruction by means of brutal civil war accompanied by incredible destruction. The destruction was so enormous, he notes, that people authored ridiculous and erroneous apocryphal stories about it.[477] In his sixth letter to John of Litarb, Jacob takes up the question of whether the Virgin Mary was of the seed of David; he uses a 'syllogism' to 'demonstrate to every Christian or Hagarene [sc.

Lot of the Apostles,' or from the Gospel, or from the Psalter ('David'), or from any other book at all, whatever it is; and if it is not right, what should a person who has used things such as these suffer? Jacob: It is entirely not right for a Christian to take answers, either from 'The Lot'—which is not 'of the Apostles' but rather of the Evil One and his disciples—or from the Gospel or from the Psalter ('David') or from any other book at all. As for the one who does this, if he is a clergyman and will not be persuaded to distance himself from this error, he should fall from his station. But if he is a monk, and educated and he has a certain rank which comes from ordination, in addition to falling from his rank, he should also be cut off from communion for a fixed time. This should also be the case with a layman.' The version of this canon which is recorded by Bar Hebraeus is an abridgement of Jacob's longer, original ruling; in the original ruling, the basis for rejecting the 'Lot of the Apostles' is not its unapostolic origin, but in the abridged version recorded by Bar Hebraeus, this seems to be the basis for rejection. For the 'The Lot of the Apostles' in Syriac, see G. Furlani, '*Una recensione siriaca delle* Sortes apostolorum,' *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* (1922-1923) 82.2, pp. 357-363.

[476] 'Now as for what was stated about the ten righteous men, whether there were [any] in Sodom: it is full
of foolishness. Indeed, we do not approve of saying—nor are we persuaded by the one who says—that Lot had other daughters apart from these two, or [that he had] sons-in-law apart from these two, or [that he had] another close relation apart from his wife: the holy book of Moses has not handed this down to us.' Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), p. ܟܒ. ܗ̇ܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܐܡܪܬ ܡܛܠ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܥܣܪܐ ܙܕܝܩܝܢ ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܣܕܘܡ. ܟܠܗ̇ ܒܪܐ. ܫܛܝܘܬܐ ܡܠܝܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܩܒܠܝܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܐܘ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܝܢ ܠܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ: ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܠܘܛ ܒܢ̈ܬܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ: ܐܘ ܚܬ̈ܢܐ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ: ܐܘ ܐܢܫ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܩܪܝܒܐ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܗ: ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܫܠܡ ܠܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܘܫܐ܀ FT available in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' p. 276.

[477] The Syriac text of this scholion is unpublished, but D. Kruisheer has published an ET of it, which I have drawn upon. See, D. Kruisheer, 'Reconstructing Jacob of Edessa's *Scholia*,' in J. Frishmann and L. van Rompay, edd., *The Book of Genesis in Jewish and Oriental Christian Interpretation: A Collection of Essays* (*Traditio Exegetica Graeca* 5) (Louvain, 1997), p. 194 (quote). Also, cf. Jacob's comments on p. 195, '(This destruction) was so enormous and surpassed (all astonishment) that also some heretic and erring people impiously composed poetical myths concerning them, (myths) full of nonsense and error, and said that out of their excrement the earth had been made firm and out of their skin the heaven had been stretched out.'

Muslim] who asks about this that the Virgin Mary, that holy one and God-bearer, is of the seed of David, even if this is not shown forth from the Scriptures.'[478] Because there was no explicit scriptural evidence that Mary was from the seed of David, people in Jacob's day were apparently attempting to prove this to be the case by making appeals to extra-canonical scriptures. Jacob disapproved of using these texts as authorities in such discussions. One should use his syllogism to make this point, and not try to do it

> by means of citing a passage as testimony concerning this matter from strange and additional stories which are brought forth in many circles and cited and invoked, but which are not from the Holy Scriptures. For, know well, O lover of truth, that I am aware that there are certain histories which have been written by zealous people of their own accord although they do not possess testimonies from the Scriptures which show that the Holy Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ, is the daughter of Anna and the daughter of Joachim the Righteous, about whom those who authored those stories assert that he was the son of Panther and that Panther the brother of Melchi was the son of Jannai, who descended in lineage from the race of the tribe of Levi. He dwelt in the region of Galilee, near a spot in the area in which the city of Tiberias was built. But look now, just as I have already previously stated, I do not want to show true what is being demanded by means of an additional proof from a spurious story...[479]

In his thirteenth letter to John of Litarb, Jacob also shows his antipathy to relying on untrustworthy sources for his understanding of Biblical history. One of the many things John wanted to know was whether the son of the widow of Sarepta whom Elijah

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[478] F. Nau, 'Lettre de Jacques d'Édesse sur la généalogie de la sainte vierge,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 6 (1901), p. 519: ܒܪܡ ܫܐܠܐ ܠܡܫܡܥܘ ܡܫܐܠ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܘܐ ܐܠܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܕܗ ܠܝ ܕܢܫܘܐ ܠܟܠ ܒܪܘܫܠܡܐ ܕܐܬܒܥ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܠܒܪܐ: ܕܒܙܪܥ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܗܝ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܘܝܠܕܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܢ ܙܪܥܗ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܘܐܦܢ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܘܝܐ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ. FT in *ibid.*, p. 525.

[479] F. Nau, 'Lettre de Jacques d'Édesse sur la généalogie de la sainte vierge,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 6 (1901), p. 519: ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܝܕ ܗܝ ܕܢܣܒ ܐܢܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܠܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܕܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܘܬܘܣܦܬܢܝܬܐ: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܦܩܢ ܠܘܬ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܘܡܬܬܢܝܢ ܘܡܬܬܩܪܝܢ ܘܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ܀ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܗܘ ܒܪܝܪ ܐܘ ܪܚܡ ܫܪܪܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܟܬܝܒܢ ܠܐܢܫܝܢ ܛܢܢܐ ܡܢ ܨܒܝܢ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܟܕ ܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܚܘܝܢ ܕܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܡܪܝܡ ܐܡܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܬܗ ܕܚܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܘܒܪܬܗ ܕܝܘܐܩܝܡ ܟܐܢܐ. ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܬܒܥܘ ܐܢܝܢ ܠܬܫܥܝܬܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܒܪܗ ܕܦܐܢܬܝܪ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܘܦܐܢܬܝܪ ܐܚܘܗܝ ܕܡܠܟܝ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܒܪ ܝܢܝ ܗܘ ܕܢܚܬ ܒܫܘܒܠܐ ܕ ܫܪܒܬܐ ܡܢ ܫܪܒܬܐ ܕܠܘܝ. ܘܥܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܕܓܠܝܠܐ ܕ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܬܪܐ ܚܕ ܒܦܢܝܬܐ ܕܒܗ ܐܬܒܢܝܬ ܛܒܪܝܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ܀ ܘܠܐ ܝܢ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܡܢ ܩܕܝܡ ܕܐܫܪܪ ܕܒܥܝܐ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܬܘܣܦܬܢܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܒܪܝܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢܐ ܠܗ، ܕܡܬܒܥܝܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܪܡ ܫܐܠܐ ܠܡܫܡܥܘ ܗܘܐ.. FT in *ibid.*, p. 525.

brought back to life (1 Kings 17:22) was Jonah, who preached to Nineveh. Jacob dismisses this connection as false and lacking a basis in a reliable source. 'Now this account,' he writes

> is written in certain histories which do not have any trustworthiness. They are ascribed to the holy Epiphanios, the Bishop of Cyprus, saying that that child whom Elijah the prophet revived is Jonah the prophet. So far as I am concerned, however, O beloved brother and lover of truth, know well that I speak to you according to the truth: I have never been persuaded to believe that any one of these [stories] speaks the truth nor I am persuaded [now] nor do I accept that I should either think or say that these stories are either from the holy Epiphanios or that that child that Elijah revived was Jonah the prophet—even if and despite the fact that people will contend and say that these stories are from the aforementioned saint, I will not agree that the child whom Elijah revived was Jonah the prophet. Neither, moreover, does it seem to even be true, because the matter is very far and distant in time from the other event. For from the beginning of the reign of Ahab until Pekah, the son of Remaliah, [2 Kings 15:25] the King of Israel, until the time of Joatham, the King of Judah—the ones in whose time it is thought that Jonah went down to Nineveh—there is a total time of 170 years. On the basis of this, the statement [about Jonah being the same as the revived boy] is not to be regarded as true. It has seemed best to me to speak in this way about this matter.[480]

All these examples show that Jacob had a strong sense that certain documents were more reliable than others as sources for history and that he was most ready to disregard and even disparage texts that did not meet his standards for trustworthiness. And Jacob's concern for authenticity was in keeping with broader trends in the world of

[480] See W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' p. ܠܐ. ܡܬܟܬܒܐ ܗܝ ܗܟܝܠ. ܒܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܗܝ، ܗܕܐ ܒܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܕܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܬܠܚܡܢܝܬܐ: ܕܪܫܝܡܢ ܥܠ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܦܝܦܢܝܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܩܘܦܪܘܣ: ܕܛܠܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܚܝ ܐܠܝܐ ܢܒܝܐ: ܗܘ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܠܡ ܝܘܢܢ ܢܒܝܐ. ܒܪܡ ܕܝܢ ܐܢܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܝܢ ܐܘ ܐܚܐ ܚܒܝܒܐ ܘܪܚܡ ܫܪܪܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܒܫܪܪܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ. ܕܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣ ܐܬܛܦܝܣܬ ܕܐܗܝܡܢ ܐܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܫܪܝܪܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܗܫܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣ ܐܢܐ ܐܘ ܡܩܒܠ ܐܢܐ: ܐܘ ܕܐܬܪܥܐ ܐܘ ܕܐܡܪ. ܕܠܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܦܝܦܢܝܘܣ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܛܠܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܚܝ ܐܠܝܐ: ܗܘ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܝܘܢܢ ܢܒܝܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܟܕ ܘܐܦܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܬܚܪܝܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܢܐܡܪܘܢ: ܕܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܘ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܐܡܝܪ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ. ܠܘ، ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܛܠܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܚܝ ܐܠܝܐ ܝܘܢܢ ܢܒܝܐ. ܠܐ ܫܠܡ ܐܢܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܚܙܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܫܪܝܪܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܣܓܝ ܪܚܝܩܐ ܘܡܦܪܫܐ ܗܝ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܡܢ ܣܘܥܪܢܗ ܕܒܬܪܗ. ܡܢ ܪܝܫ ܓܝܪ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܗ ܕܐܚܐܒ ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܦܩܚ ܒܪ ܪܘܡܠܝܐ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܝܣܪܝܠ: ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܙܒܢܐ ܕܝܘܬܡ ܡܠܟܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܙܒܢܝܗܘܢ ܡܣܬܒܪܐ ܕܢܚܬ ܝܘܢܢ ܠܢܝܢܘܐ. ܒܟܠܗ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܫܢܝܐ ܩ̈ܥ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܡܢܗ ܕܗܕܐ. ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗ܆ ܡܠܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܠܡܣܬܒܪܘ ❖ ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܗܢ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܬܚܙܝ، ܠܝ ܠܡܐܡܪ ❖ FT available in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' pp. 268-269.

Eastern Christianity of his day: the Acts of the Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681) are notable for the concern they show for outing Monothelete textual forgeries.[481]

Jacob could also critically evaluate the authenticity of purported claims of authorship based on style and ideas, just like Ḥunayn would later do with the works of Galen. In his first letter to John, he notes that the Stylite had written out of perplexity—he had read some *memre* containing strange ideas and does not know what to make of them: ‘For now you have written to me, O brother,’ Jacob noted, ‘concerning causes of confusion which have come upon you in certain *memre* that you have encountered in which there are passages that are alien to the thinking of the doctors of the Church.’[482] The cause of the doubt was a dissonance between the strange doctrines present in the *memre* and their attribution to one of the most important of Miaphysite theologians: Jacob of Sarugh. Jacob of Edessa was emphatic and withering in his repudiation of this attribution:

> Understand then and know what I am saying to you: these *memre* which are written and falsely ascribed to the teacher Mar Jacob do not belong to Mar Jacob, nor do they belong to the Spirit who spoke through him and through all the doctors of the Church. Learn Jacob from Jacob and pass judgement on them, that they are not from Jacob.[483] Neither are they from Ephrem, his teacher and

[481] See S. Wessel, ‘Literary Forgery and the Monothelete Controversy: Some Scrupulous Uses of Deception,’ *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 42 (2001), pp. 201-220. I am grateful to Peter Brown for this reference.

[482] R. Schröter, ‘Erster Brief Jakob’s von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,’ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 24 (1870), pp. 268-269: ܟܬܒܬ ܠܝ ܓܝܪ ܗܫܐ ܐܚܘܢ: ܡܛܠ ܦܘܫ̈ܟܐ ܠܡ ܕܗܘܘ ܠܟ ܒܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܦܓܥܬ ܒܗܘܢ. ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܠܡ ܕܢܘܟܪܝܢ ܠܬܐܘܪܝܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܦܢܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ. GT in *ibid*., p. 273. FT in F. Nau, ‘Cinq lettres de Jacques d’Édesse a Jean le stylite (traduction et analyse),’ *Revue de l’orient chrétien* 2: 4 (14) (1909), p. 434

[483] Or, ‘Jacob [of Edessa] has learned from Jacob, and passes judgement on them…’ This is how both Nau, ‘Cinq lettres de Jacques d’Édesse,’ p. 435, and Schröter ‘Erster Brief Jakob’s von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,’ p. 274, understand the passage, presumably because they understand the imperative of ܦܣܩ to be ܐܦܣܩ. But for ܦܣܩ as an imperative form of ܦܣܩ in this manuscript, cf. also BL Add. 12,172, fol. 81b, ln. 23: ܕܟ ܐܢ ܗܘ ܠܝ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܘܦܣܩ ܠܡܚܒܪܐ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ... also see Jacob of Edessa’s letter to Simeon the Stylite in BL Add. 17,168, fol. 158a: ܦܣܩ ܡܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ: ܕܛܒ ܚܣܡܐ ܡܢ ܩܘܠܣܐ, ‘Learn therefore from these things that envy is better than praise…’ In support of Nau and Schröter’s understanding, however, Yossi Witztum has pointed out to me that PSQ is not the imperative

neither do they come from sound men who possess the mind of Christ. Instead, these *memre* are from a small-time rhetorician and sage from [Jacob's] time period who wanted to garner attention for himself and include himself among [the ranks of] authors. He considered himself to be a writer and an exegete and blew and smeared his boogers on the teacher Mar Jacob. In certain passages of his words, he has at places lifted select thoughts and ideas from the works of the Teacher and inserted them into his own speech. Moreover, he has borrowed certain elements in certain places—relying on [Jacob's] thinking and logic—things which he [actually] heard [being spoken] behind weaving looms, and by people sitting at the gates, and from those who were drinking alcohol and even from those who were repulsively gathered together on seats in dungheaps and speaking foolish nonsense, and he has placed [them], without fear [of being found out] in these *memre* which he has stitched together.[484]

Jacob had his reasons for rejecting the attribution of these *memre* to Jacob of Sarugh.

He was very familiar with the works of Jacob of Sarugh—he had presumably 'learned'

Jacob from Jacob—and he knew that the author of these bogus *memre* was doing things

that the authenic Jacob of Sarugh never did with his own compositions.

[Ps. Jacob] composed in two meters—doing only this thing well, though he did not realize that he composed them in two meters, with the result that they are known not to be from the Teacher Mar Jacob, who never wrote anything at all in the entirety of his verse *memre* that was not according to one meter—that which is twelve syllables and which is divided into three sections [κύβοι], four syllables apiece. [Ps. Jacob] has neither the accent nor the organization [τάξις] [of Jacob] in the things which he says; neither does his manner of speaking, nor his idea[s],

form of *psaq*, which would suggest that one should read YLP as a perfect and not an imperative. PSQ, however, could be read as the imperative of *paseq*, which would support my reading.

[484] Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' p. 269: ܐܬܬܥܝܪܘܬܒ ܡܕܡ
ܡܕܡ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܫ ܘܒܕܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܒܠܚܘܕܝܢ ܘܠܒܝܫܝܢ ܒܡܠܦܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܕܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ:
ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܕܙܘܥܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܫܟܠܠ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ: ܘܒܠܚܘܕܝܗܘܢ ܬ̈ܠܡܝܕܐ ܕܒܪܬܐ. ܡܢ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܝܠܦ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܘܦܫܩ ܠܠܫܢܗܘܢ
ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܕܝܥܩܘܒ: ܐܦܠܐ ܕܐܦܪܝܡ ܡܠܦܢܢ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܚܟܝ̈ܡܐ ܬ̈ܠܡܝܕܐ ܘܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܢܐ
ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܗܠܝܢ: ܕܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܬ̈ܠܝܠܘܬܐ ܘܣܘܦܣܛܐ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܕܒܙܒܢܗ: ܕܨܒܐ ܕܢܬܚܙܐ ܘܢܬܪܫܡ
ܒܝܬ ܟܬܘܒܐ: ܘܐܬܚܫܒ ܗܘ ܠܗ ܒܝܬ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܟܬܘܒܐ ܘܡܦܫܩܢܐ: ܘܢܦܚ ܘܛܫ ܡ̈ܢܚܝܪܘܗܝ ܒܡܠܦܢܐ ܡܪܝ
ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܘܒܕܘܟܝܬ ܕܘܟ ܡܢ ܡ̈ܠܘܗܝ: ܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܦܘܪ̈ܫܢܐ ܡܕܡ ܘܡܚ̈ܫܒܬܐ ܒܕܘܟ ܕܘܟ: ܡܢ ܡ̈ܠܝ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ. ܘܣܕܪ ܠܗ
ܒܡ̈ܠܝ ܕܝܠܗ. ܒܕܘܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܝܢ ܘܒܕܘܟ ܕܘܟ: ܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܒܪ ܐܬܬܟܠ ܥܠ ܗܘܢܗ ܘܥܠ ܡܠܝܠܘܬܗ: ܡ̈ܠܝ ܕܫܡܥ
ܡܢ ܒܣ̈ܬܪ ܡܙ̈ܩܐ: ܘܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܬܒܝܢ ܒܬܪ̈ܥܐ ܘܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܬܝܢ ܫܟܪܐ: ܘܐܦ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܬܟܢܫܝܢ
ܡܢ ܕܪܐܝܬ ܥܠ ܬ̈ܘܬܒܐ ܕܡܙ̈ܒܠܐ ܘܡܦܩܝܢ ܡܢ ܦܘܡ: ܘܣܡ ܠܗ ܕܠܐ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܡ̈ܐܡܪܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܚܝܛ. GT in *ibid.*, p. 274. FT in F. Nau, 'Cinq lettres de Jacques d'Édesse a Jean le stylite (traduction et analyse),' *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 2:4/14 (1909), p. 435

nor his meaning, not even the appearance [εἰκών] and arrangement of his words.[485]

Jacob's objection to the *memre*'s authenticity was built on more than just stylistic grounds. For him, what was being said was more important than how precisely it was being said, and on the level of meaning and ideas, Ps.-Jacob had fallen woefully short of the doctrinal purity of the real Jacob of Sarugh.

> Now, it would have been right to consider him worthy of pardon for erring in such small things had he not been found to go astray in bigger matters. Since, however, he is without a clue in everything [big and small], he shall also be without forgiveness [in everything], for he has said many things which do not accord with the mind of the mystagogues of the Church and the Spirit of God will not accept the things falsely attributed to it.[486]

Jacob then offers a list of some of Ps.-Jacob's doctrinal aberrations:

> He says that on the first day, spiritual, incorporeal hosts were created along with the heavens and the earth—something which neither Moses wrote nor the Doctors of the Church have handed down. He has also stated that the intelligences—those rational and secondary lights—are not in the image of God, their Creator (I am speaking about the angelic and heavenly hosts, the servants of God who do His will), and that Adam is greater and more excellent than Gabriel and Michael. Moreover, in his mind, he has thought that this sack which has two openings—one for putting in and one for taking out—is the invisible and inimitable image of God. Furthermore, about Satan—who was created with the cherubim and who was made a being of light along with all the spiritual hosts who, because of his arrogance and boasting against God became darkness, saying 'I will ascend to heaven and will place my throne higher than the clouds

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[485] Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' pp. 269-270: ܘܣܝܡ ܒܡܠ̈ܬܗ ܡܗ̈ܓܝܢܘܬܐ. ܒܪ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܝܪ ܚܒܪ ܘܡܢ ܠܐ ܢܕܥ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܡܠ̈ܬܗ ܡܢ̈ܝܚܢ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܕܡܪܝ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܡܠܦܢܐ: ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܚܒܪ ܫܦܝ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܘܗܝ ܕܡܫܡܫܝܬܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܒܟܕܝܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܡܬ̈ܟܪܝܢ ܫܦܠܐ: ܘܕܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܠܬܠܬܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܢܬܝܢܐ ܫܦܠܐ. ܒܪ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܘܡܐ ܐܦ ܠܟܡܐ ܒܡܠܝ ܕܐܡܪ: ܘܠܐ ܠܡܠܬܗ ܘܠܐ ܠܣܘܟܠܗ ܘܠܐ ܠܡܫܚܠܦܘܬܗ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܐܝܩܘܢܐ ܘܣܘܟܠܐ ܕܡܠ̈ܘܗܝ. GT in *ibid*., p. 274. FT in F. Nau, 'Cinq lettres de Jacques d'Édesse,' p. 435.

[486] Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' p. 270: ܘܒܡܚܠܠܬܐ ܡܢ ܕܥܠܝܢ ܒܙܥܘܪ̈ܝܬܐ܆ ܠܡܫܒܩܢܐ ܕܫܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܬܚܫܒ: ܐܠܘ ܒܪ̈ܒܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܕܛܥܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܒܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܗܘ܆ ܐܦ ܕܠܐ ܫܘܒܩܢܐ ܗܘ. ܐܡܪ ܓܝܪ ܣ̈ܓܝܐܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܐܫܬܘܝܢ ܠܗܘܢܐ ܕܡܐܪ̈ܙܢܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܩܒܠ ܠܗܝܢ ܪܘܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܬܕ̈ܓܠܢ ܒܗ܀ GT in *ibid*., p. 274. FT in F. Nau, 'Cinq lettres de Jacques d'Édesse,' p. 435.

and the stars and I will be like the Most High,'[487] and who had to fall and be made darkness a long and immeasurable time before this world came into being—[he says that] he fell on the sixth day and that it was because he envied the glory of Adam that he was dismissed from his rank. These things are not to be found stated in the words of the Holy Scriptures, nor are they expressed by the Interpreters of these [Scriptures]. They are, rather, found clearly written in the books of men who are heretics and in error and who are the opponents of God and the mind of the Doctors of the Church.[488]

This list, it turns out, was only a partial one of the erroneous ideas to be found in the bogus *memre*. Jacob goes on to list other ideas present in the pseudepigraphal *memre* which he regards as nothing more than foolish nonsense and then so that 'they will be known to every one and no one will be led astray by them as being written by the teacher Mar Jacob,'[489] he describes the meter of each of the two poems and gives their incipits: 'these are the two *memre* that this man fabricated and composed as he supposed concerning the Hexaemeron, in the likeness [of the work of] Mar Jacob. He

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[487] cf. Is. 14:14. Jacob cites this same verse in connection with Satan in his thirteenth letter to John the Stylite, see W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), p. ܝ.

[488] Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' p. 270: ܐܡܪ ܕܒܥܘܬܐ ܘܩܕܡܝܐ ܐܬܒܪܝܘ ܚܝ̈ܠܘܬܐ ܫ̈ܡܝܢܝܬܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܒܝܘܡ ܚܕ ܥܡ ܫܡܝܐ ܘܐܪܥܐ: ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܐ ܒܟܬܒܐ: ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܬ̈ܠܦܢܐ ܐܫܠܡܘ. ܐܡܪ ܬܘܒ: ܕܠܐ ܐܬܒܣܡܘܢ ܗ̈ܘܦܢܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܬ̈ܠܝܠܐ ܘܗܘܦܪܐ ܛܝܒܐ ܡܢ ܠܒܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܥܘܕܪܗܘܢ: ܚܝ̈ܠܘܬܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܡ̈ܠܐܟܐ ܘܥܝ̈ܪܐ: ܡܫܡ̈ܫܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܒܪܝܢ ܒܫܡܝܐ: ܘܕܪܒ ܘܡܬܓܪ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܒܪܢܫܐܝܬ ܘܡܫܟܢܐܝܬ: ܘܐܣܦܪ ܒܬܪܒܥܬܗ ܕܗܕܐ ܫܒܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ̇ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܦܘܩ̈ܕܢܐ: ܫܪ ܕܡܦܩܠ ܘܫܪ ܕܢܦܩ: ܐܬܢܟܣ ܠܡܠܟܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܕܡܬܒܥܬܐ ❖ ܐܡܪ ܬܘܒ ܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܒܡ ܒܪܘܟܐ ܐܬܒܪܝ: ܘܢܘܗܪܐ ܐܬܒܪܝ ܒܡ ܒܠܗܘܢ ܚܝ̈ܠܘܬܐ ܫ̈ܡܝܢܝܬܐ: ܗ̇ܘ ܕܡܛܠ ܕܢܘܗܪܗ ܘܡܫܬܠܛܢܘܬܗ ܕܟܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘܐ ܫܥܒܕܐ: ܟܕ ܐܡܪ ܕܠܫܡܝܐ ܐܣܩ ܘܠܥܠ ܡܢ ܥܢ̈ܢܐ ܘܟܘܟ̈ܒܐ ܐܣܝܡ ܟܘܪܣܝ ܘܐܗܘܐ ܕܡܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܪܝܡܐ: ܗܘ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܕܢܦܠ ܘܢܚܫܟ ܣܓܝ ܩܕܡ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܗܢܐ ܥܠܡܐ: ܠܙܒܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܡܫܚܢܐ. ܕܒܝܘܡܐ ܕܫܬܐ ܢܦܠ. ܘܡܛܠ ܕܚܣܡ ܠܗ ܒܐܝܩܪܗ ܕܐܕܡ ܐܫܬܕܝ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗ. ܘܗܠܝܢ ܠܐ ܒܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܡܫܟܚܘ ܐܡܝ̈ܪܢ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢ ܡܦܫ̈ܩܢܐ ܕܠܗܝܢ ܐܬܡܠܠ̈ܝ. ܐܠܐ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܘܛܥ̈ܝܐ ܘܣܩܘܒ̈ܠܝܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܪܥܝܢܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܦܢܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ❖ GT in *ibid.*, pp. 274-275. FT in F. Nau, 'Cinq lettres de Jacques d'Édesse,' pp. 435-436. In his thirteenth letter to John of Litarb, Jacob takes up this issue of when exactly Satan fell and how long it was before he fell; among other things, he says that we cannot know because it has not been stated in the Scriptures. See W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' pp. ܟ – ܝ. For commentary on all the different doctrines listed in this passage and discussion of various patristic and Jewish sources where they can be found, see Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' pp. 282-289.

[489] Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' p. 271: ܡܛܠ ܕܠܟܠܢܫ ܢܬܝܕܥܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܢܬܛܥܐ ܒܗܘܢ: ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܡܬܟܬܒܝܢ GT in *ibid.*, pp. 275-276. FT in F. Nau, 'Cinq lettres de Jacques d'Édesse,' p. 436.

passed them off as that of the Teacher—not [out of humility], fleeing from becoming known and being praised in vain by singers of empty compliments, but rather [fleeing] from becoming known and having his foolishness repudiated.'[490]

Jacob's attitude towards pseudepigraphy was far from simple, however. He did not simply equate the falsely attributed with bad and the correctly attributed with good; he could grant that pseudepigraphy had its uses and benefits. Perhaps Jacob's kind attitude towards this practice had something to do with the fact that he himself had engaged in it, composing an apocalypse prefaced to the Syriac *Testamentum domini nostri Jesu Christi* in the name of none other than Christ himself.[491] We see Jacob's more nuanced view of false attribution in his eighth letter to John of Litarb, where he responds to three different questions, the first of which relates to the number of books written by Solomon. John was confused: Clement of Alexandria had stated there there were five books of Solomon, but other Doctors of the church—Athanasios, Basil, Gregory, Amphilochios and Eusebios, among others—had stated that there were only three books of Solomon.[492] Jacob himself was not sure why this might be the case but was willing to hazard a guess: perhaps it was the case that Clement regarded the book

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[490] Schröter, 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' p. 271: ܗܠܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܦܠܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܗܢܐ: ܘܣܒܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܢܝܢ ܕܐܣܒܪ ܥܠ ܐܫܬܐ ܢܩܦܐ ܒܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܕܡܪܝ، ܒܣܡܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܗ ܒܡܠܦܢܐ: ܠܘ ܟܕ ܥܪܩ ܡܢ ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܢܬܝܕܥ ܘܢܫܬܒܚ ܣܪܝܩܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܡܙܡܪܝ ܣܪܝܩܘܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܢܬܝܕܥ ܘܢܫܬܛܠܐ ܫܛܝܘܬܗ.. GT in *ibid*., p. 276.

[491] For Jacob as the author of this apocalypse, see H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord: Jacob of Edessa's Response to Islam,' *Aram* 6 (1994), pp. 104-114.

[492] See BL Add. 12,172, fol. 95a. ܕܫܐܠܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܡܠܟܐ ܗܘ ܚܟܝܡܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܥܠ ܘܦܢܝ ܐ ܥܠ ܐܦ ܒܡܫܡܫܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܐܟܘܬܟ ܐܬܦܢܝܬ: ܘܐܬܬܕܟܪ ܒܗ ܒܡܫܒܚܬܐ ܡܠܝܫܬܐ ܕܐܘܪܚܐ. ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܗܘܝܠ ܐܝܟܢ ܠܝ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܦܠܝܓܘܬܗ ܠܬܠܬܐ ܕܦܪܘܣܗ ܚܟܝܡܐ: ܒܕܐܝܟ ܒܡܩܗ ܗܘ، ܕܐܬܟܢܫܘ ܕܡܛܠ ܡܠܘܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܒܟܬܒܬ ܐܫܘܝܬܢ: ܕܢܡܠܐ ܐܬܠܬܗܘܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܫܠܡܘܢ: ܒܕ ܠܐ ܦܪܫ ܐܘ ܥܒܕܗ ܠܝ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܐܝܟܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܠܝܢ. ܘܕܬܠܬܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܘܐܡܠܬܗ ܠܝ ܬܠܬܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܟܬܒܘ: ܐܬܐܡܪܘ ܗܘ. ܒܡܬܠܐ ܫܘܢܘܗܝ ܟܢܫܐ ܘܡܫܡܫܢ ܐܡܬܠܐ ܒܗܘܢ. ܘܐܦ ܡܕܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܦ ܐܣܩܦܣ ܗܘ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܘܐܦ ܐܣܪܝܢ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܡܢ ܟܬܒ ܒܗ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ... FT in F. Nau, 'Cinq lettres de Jacuqes d'Édesse a Jean le stylite (traduction et analyse),' *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 2:4/14 (1909), p.428

Wisdom as having been written by Solomon and furthermore, he may have divided the book of Proverbs into two parts.[493] In order to put John's anxious mind at ease, Jacob also stated that he would append a 'copy of a certain small scholion concerning Wisdom—i.e., the All Virtuous—which is called by many 'of Solomon,' which I composed out of a love of toil while working diligently on a revision of [the translation of] the book, along with others.'[494] Jacob's scholion on the book of Wisdom vividly exhibits his interest in issues of textual authenticity as well as his keen awareness of the practice of pseudepigraphy and its motivations.

> This book, which is called 'The Great Wisdom' among the Syrians and 'All-Virtuous Wisdom' [sc. ἡ πανάρετος σοφία] among the Greeks is actually not from Solomon. It is, however, inscribed and classed by many lovers of toil [sc. φιλόπονοι]—i.e., those who read [it]—with the books of Solomon. Nevertheless, it seems to me that two things concerning it are proper and true: that it is not right to decide and assert strongly that it is from Solomon and that we should consider it and class it along with the books of Solomon insofar as its author, although not Solomon himself, wrote and arranged his entire work in the persona of Solomon and placed his inscription on it. Therefore, these two things which I have said are true: that it is not from Solomon and that it is from Solomon.

Jacob recognized that there was a tension between the book's ascription and the reality of its authorship. At the same time, he also knew that the book, though not actually written by Solomon had much that was spiritually profitable in it and that the person who had actually written it had done so with good motives.

> This should also be added and stated concerning it: its author was in truth a God-fearing man and of good mind; he was from the Greeks or from the Hebrews and from among those [who lived] in that tumultuous era which was full of persecution against the God-fearing people of the Hebrews, for he was in

[493] See BL Add. 12,172, fol. 95a and Nau, 'Cinq lettres,' p. 429 for FT.

[494] BL Add. 12,172, fol. 95b: ܒܪܡ ܕܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܢܝܚܐ ܕܐܝܣܘܪܬܟ ܘܒܘܝܐܐ. ܪܢܝܬ ܕܐܫܕܪ ܠܟ ܥܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܦ ܦܘܚܡܐ ܕܣܟܘܠܝܘܢ ܚܕ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܕܥܒܝܕ ܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܡܛܠܬܗ ܕܚܟܡܬܐ ܗܝ ܟܠܝܠܬ ܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ: ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܡܢ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ. ܗܝ ܕܒܪܚܡܬ ܥܡܠܐ ܥܒܕܬ ܟܕ ܡܬܚܦܛ ܗܘܝܬ ܐܦ ܥܠ ܬܘܪܨܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܟܬܒܐ ܥܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܀ FT in Nau, 'Cinq lettres,' p. 429. Nau, n. 3, notes that the revision Jacob refers to took place from 704-705.

> the time of Judah Maccabee and his brothers. Like a zealous and God-fearing person, he decided to write the book in the persona of Solomon for the exhortation and consideration of the nation of the Jews. He did not inscribe and write upon it the name of his own person so that it would be worthy of acceptance and credence.

Jacob's experience in translation meant that he had a sense for literature which had been originally composed in Syriac and literature which had been translated into it. He could therefore tell that Wisdom was originally written in Greek and not Hebrew, though he knew the author wanted to give the opposite impression—that the book had originally been written in Hebrew and later translated into Greek.

> It is also probable that he wrote it in the language and speech of the Greeks while giving the idea that he had translated it and transmitted it from the Hebrew language, either because all the people in that time were speaking Greek or perhaps because he sent it to those who were scattered among the Greeks...[495]

Another factor complicating Jacob's attitude towards critical questions was that his views of authorship were informed by a model of the Christian community which saw it comprised of some who could handle materials and information which might cause doubt and difficulty and some who simply could not. He was a spiritual elitist: dissimulation in the name of the spiritual well-being of weaker brethren was actually

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[495] BL Add. 12,172, fols. 96b-97a: ܒܠܫܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܘܦܟܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܡܬܡܠܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇: ܠܘܬ ܡ̈ܠܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܬܡܠܠܐ ܒܡܠܝܠܘܬ ܡܬܬܪܓܡܢܘܬܐ. ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܗ̇ܝ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ. ܒܡ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܒܢ̈ܝ. ܡܠܟ ܘܡܬܚܒܫ ܡܢ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܩܢܝ. ܘܡܫܬܡܥܢܐ ܠܝ. ܐܦ ܕܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ ܩܠܝܠ ܘܦܣܝܩܢ ܡܬܡܠܠܢ. ܘܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܡܫܟܚܘ ܘܠܡܐܡܪ ܣܠܩܐܝܬ ܕܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܝ. ܘܕܙܕܩ ܕܢܣܬܟܠܘܢ ܘܢܬܒܚܢܘܢ ܒܡ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ . ܒܗ̇ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܡܬܡܠܠܢܘ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܝ ܗܘ ܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܠܐ ܒܗܘܬ ܐܢܫ ܕܡܢ ܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܐܡܠܠܗ ܘܟܬܒܗ ܠܟܠܗ ܣܦܪܐ. ܘܟܠܗ̇ ܒܫܡ ܠܗ ܙܘܦܝܐ. ܐܡܝܢܐ ܒܗܘܬ ܕܟܬܒ. ܕܬܪ̈ܝܗܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܬܬܪܬ ܥܒܪ̈ܝ ܠܡܐܡܪ. ܘܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ. ܘܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܀ ܙܕܩ ܕܝܢ ܠܡܫܟܚܘ ܘܠܡܐܡܪ ܡܬܡܠܠܘ ܐܦ ܗܢܐ. ܕܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܗ̇ܝ ܗܘ ܡܬܡܠܠܢܘ: ܒܟܪܝܐ ܕܝܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܫܦܝܪ ܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡ̈ܠܝܐ ܐܘ ܒܗܘܬ ܒܒܪܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ. ܘܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܘ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܘܕܓܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܙܘܦܝܐ ܠܡܫܬܠ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܝܠ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܒܪܝܐ: ܕܒܬܘܡܬܐ ܕܢܘܗܪܐ ܡܟܣܝ ܘܕܐܬܘܗܝ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ. ܕܐܢܫ ܐ̱ܠܨܐ ܡܢ ܘܕܝܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝ ܕܒܬܟܝܒܗ ܠܬܘܟܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܕܡܢ ܦܪܨ ܘܦܐ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ: ܐܢܫ ܕܠܬܪܬܝܢܘܬܐ ܘܡܬܒܝܢܘܬܐ ܠܒܬܟܐ ܕܡ̈ܕܝܢܬܐ. ܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܢܚܡܬ ܘܢܣܒ ܒܠܗܘܢ. ܫܡܥܐ ܕܦܪܨ ܦܘܐ ܕܠܡ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܒܐܝܟܢ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܥܘܐ ܠܡܬܡܠܠܘܬܐ ܘܕܥܘܐ ܠܬܪܡܡܬܐ. ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܬܘܒ. ܐܦ ܕܒܠܫܢܐ ܘܡܬܡܠܠܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܝܐ ܐܬܡܠܠܗ. ܒܗ ܢܦܩ ܒܐܝܟܢ ܡܬܦܪܢܣܢܘܬܐ ܐܦ ܕܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܥܒܪܝܐ ܦܫܩܗ ܘܐܫܠܡܗ. ܐܘ ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܥܡܐ ܒܝܘܡܬܐ ܗܘ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܡܬܡܠܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܐܘ ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܝܘܢܝܐ ܡܒܕܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܫܕܪܗ.

something to be encouraged. This spiritual and intellectual elitism, however, was dictated by a pastoral concern for weaker believers, not arrogance. In his fourteenth letter to John, Jacob writes that he has responded with few words to the subjects of John's inquiry, 'although I know that they need many words.' 'But know well,' he continues, 'I have intentionally kept them short and withheld because I judge that matters such as these [should not be] spoken to everyone.' John, Jacob noted, was a person who had many people asking him about the things he himself had written to Jacob about. As a result, Jacob wrote, 'I will set down the same rule for you: be vigilant and do not give what is holy to dogs and throw pearls before swine...do not speak to everyone about those things which are mystical and which should not be spoken of in front of everybody.'[496] Similarly, in his second letter to John, Jacob informs the Stylite that 'there are many things in the laws of the Spirit which are written and true, but which we should not offer answers about to everyone who asks concerning them...showing prudence on account of the [enquirer's] insufficiency, seeing that perhaps when he hears the precision of the response, not only will he not receive healing with respect to what he asks, but also with respect to what is [already] living and sound within him—everything will die and perish.' Sometimes, Jacob reminded John, when weak and incapable people hear difficult things, they simply leave and go away from the faith—as evidence, he quotes John 6:66. 'Consider,' he therefore tells him,

[496] BL Add. 12,172, fol. 126b ܟܕ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܣ̈ܓܝܐܬܐ ܣܢܝܩܝܢ ܗ̈ܘܘ. ܘܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܨܝܪ ܥܒܕܬ ܕܒ
ܒܝܕܥܬ ܘܟܠܝܬ ܐܢܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܘ ܠܟܠܢܫ ܕܐܝܟ ܐܢܝܢ ܕܢܬܐܡܪ̈ܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܟܢ. ... ܗܘ ܒܪ ܗܘ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܣܐܡ
ܐܢܐ. ܐܙܕܗܪ ܠܐ ܬܬܠ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܠܟܠܒܐ: ܘܬܪܡܐ ܡ̈ܪܓܢܝܬܐ ܩܕܡ ܚ̈ܙܝܪܐ. ... ܠܐ ܬܐܡܪ ܠܟܠܢܫ: ܥܠ ܗܠܝܢ
ܕܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܐܪ̈ܙܢܝܬܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܐܡܪ̈ܢ ܩܕܡ ܟܠܢܫ܀

what it is I am saying to you and let these secret things be for you alone and for your soul and your heart and your mind and your conscience. I do not know what more I should say. Do not tell me what you have written to me: ‘I have shown these things to many people, and they have been troubled at them in bewilderment.’ To what end do you act this way and show forth these things? For what purpose are they made to doubt and caused to have difficulty and made ill? You see that not everybody is sufficient [to deal with] an idea and not everybody can bear it. Nor does everybody possess a mind which is nourished and beneficial. Instead, sometimes something deadly will come upon those who hear [such things]. Have you not looked upon the seed which fell upon the shallow and rocky ground? As soon as the sun shone and waxed hot against it, it immediately withered.[497] Know [this], if what I am saying is agreeable to you, and learn to be prudent in places and to say one thing instead of something [else] to various people out of good judgment, either ‘I don’t know,’ or ‘I have not learned this matter precisely,’ as you get a sense for a person’s inability [to deal with difficult matters]. Do not answer each person everything he asks of you and give the bone of bull to an infant, so that he runs away and you become for him a cause of loss, or we choke him off when he is still one of those who is in need of milk.[498]

We see how Jacob’s spiritual elitism intersected with his critical approach towards texts in his thirteenth letter to John of Litarb, a letter in which he takes up a large number of questions relating to a number of different Biblical stories. His responses here, more than anywhere else in his letters to John, offer us a glimpse of the critical scholar at work. The second question Jacob responds to in this letter deals with

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[497] cf. Matthew 13:5

[498] Cf. Hebrews 5:12-14. For the text, see BL Add. 12,172, fol. 81b: ܦܓܥܬܐ ܐܢܬ ܒܢܦܫܟ ܕܪܘܚܢܐ ܕܒܠܒܟ ܘܬܪܥܝܬܟ. ܘܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܠܝ ܕܐܡܠ ܡܢ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܠܝ ܡܛܠܬܗܘܢ. ܢܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܦܘܫ ܦܬ ܓܒܐ ܒܠܚܘܕܘܗܝ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܒ ܫܪܪܐ: ܒܗ ܒܟܕܢ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܠܐ ܦܣܩܘܬܗ. ܕܕܠܟܐ ܒܗ ܫܟܚ ܠܗ ܠܫܬܬܬܘܬܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ. ܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܬܐܣܝܐ ܠܐ ܢܬܐܣܝܐ ܒܠ ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܡܫܟܚ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܐܢܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܕܚܝ ܘܣܠܡܢ. ܕܒܠ ܒܠ ܢܚܘܬ ܘܢܐܒܕ. ... ܐܣܬܟܠ ܠܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܘܫܠܡ ܕܪܐܙܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܟ ܕܝܠܟ ܒܠܚܘܕܝܟ: ܘܠܢܦܫܟ ܘܠܠܒܟ ܘܠܬܪܥܝܬܟ ܕܝܠܟ ܘܠܬܐܪܬܟ: ܘܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܕܡܢܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܐܡܪ. ܘܠܐ ܬܐܡܪ ܠܝ ܡܠܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܟܬܒܬ ܠܝ. ܕܠܣܓܝܐܐ ܠܗ ܚܘܝܬ ܐܢܝܢ ܘܐܝܟ ܕܒܬܗܦܟܢܘܬܐ ܡܬܚܫܒܝܢ ܒܗܝܢ. ܘܡܛܠ ܡܢܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܥܒܕ ܐܢܬ ܘܡܚܘܐ ܐܢܝܢ. ܘܡܛܠ ܡܢܐ ܡܬܦܠܓܝܢ ܘܡܬܥܩܢ ܘܡܬܟܪܗܝܢ. ܚܙܐ ܐܢܬ: ܕܠܘ ܟܠܢܫ ܣܦܩ ܠܗ ܠܡܠܬܐ: ܘܠܘ ܟܠܢܫ ܡܣܝܒܪ ܠܗ̇: ܠܘ ܠܟܠܢܫ ܗܘܢܐ ܡܬܬܪܣܝܢܐ ܘܡܘܬܪܢܐ: ܐܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܡܘܬܢܝܬܐ ܗܘܝܐ ܠܫܡܘܥܝܗ. ܠܐ ܚܪܬ ܐܢܬ ܒܙܪܥܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܦܠ ܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ ܗܝ ܩܠܝܠܬܐ ܘܟܐܦܢܝܬܐ: ܕܟܕ ܕܢܚ ܫܡܫܐ ܘܚܡ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܡܚܕܐ ܝܒܫ. ܕܥ ܐܢ ܫܦܪ ܠܟ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܘܝܠܦ ܠܡܗܘܐ ܡܬܒܝܢܐ ܒܕܘܟܝܢ. ܘܠܡܐܡܪ ܡܕܡ ܚܠܦ ܡܕܡ ܠܐܢܫ ܐܢܫ ܡܕܒܪܢܐܝܬ: ܐܘ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܐܘ ܕܠܐ ܝܠܦܬ ܠܗ ܗܕܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ: ܟܕ ܡܬܪܓܫ ܐܢܬ ܒܠܐ ܫܟܝܚܘܬܗ. ܘܠܐ ܠܟܠܢܫ ܬܦܢܐ ܒܠ ܡܐ ܕܡܫܐܠ ܠܟ. ܘܬܬܠ ܓܪܡܐ ܕܬܘܪܐ ܠܫܒܪܐ ܠܝܠܘܕܐ. ܘܢܥܪܘܩ ܘܬܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܥܠܬܐ ܠܚܘܣܪܢܐ ܐܘ ܢܚܢܘܩܝܘܗܝ. ܟܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܥܕܟܝܠ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܥܠ ܚܠܒܐ ܣܢܝܩܝܢ܀

an interesting question—the origin of reading and writing. John wanted to know if there was literacy before Moses:

> As for the second question which you asked, O brother, 'is what is said true, namely that there was no writing and letters before Moses'? Why have you only stated, 'it is said,' and you have not also made the statement, 'it is written'? Indeed, there is a homily given—know well—and a treatise written [about this topic] by the holy Athanasios, that apostolic man who is truly the teacher of all the church in the entire inhabited world.

At first blush, it seems rather odd that Athanasios, or John or Jacob for that matter, would have held strong opinions about when writing did or did not exist. Nevertheless, Athanasios had staked out a position on this issue and held that writing did not exist before Moses' time. Jacob, however, had no problem in disagreeing with such a weighty authority.

> Nevertheless, it is not true, for even that holy man was a human being, and all humans lie, as it is written [cf. Ps. 116:11] and all humans err because they are human. All humans go astray by nature and all human speech is weak and easy to take apart. There is no one in all of humanity who speaks like a human and yet does not make mistakes in what he says.

More than just Jacob's view of human fallibility was at play in his disagreement with Athanasios. He also knew the reason why Athanasios had taken the stand on the history of writing which he had. Athanasios' concerns were not about historical reality; what was really at stake for the Bishop of Alexandria were contemporary theological disputes—he was attempting to cut the ground out from beneath the feet of his opponents.

> Now, many people at the time of this saint had gone mad and were speaking foolishness, each according to his own will, and were putting forth many and diverse apocryphal scriptures and each one was citing evidences from them in accordance with their skewed point of view. In addition to all the apocryphal scriptures, those people who were making arguments were also citing the apocryphal book of Enoch. Just like a wise and crafty physician who wishes to restrain the commotion of a sick person completely forbids [the sick man] from

all food—although it is not right to do so—both the harmful and the healthy, [Athanasios] forbade and cut them off from everything alike, from those which were true and from those which were untrue, so as to prevent them from being attracted and attached to apocryphal scriptures. Along with all these books [which he forbade], he also [cut them off] from the book of Enoch, which is authentic, saying in one of his festal letters, ‘Where have they gotten the book of Enoch from? For there was neither writing nor letters before the Flood.’

Jacob was fond of metaphors which equated the task of the bishop or teacher with that of a medical doctor,[499] and he justified Athanasios’ deliberately inaccurate portrayal of the past as a form of spiritual paternalism: this was done for the good of the patient.

As further evidence that Athanasios was not solid in his belief that there was no writing before the Flood, Jacob was able to point out that Athanasios made his assertion to this effect rather quickly, almost in passing. One could read between the lines:

This is the statement which this saint made—briefly. It was not with many deliberate words and extended discussion that he made it, such that everyone would definitely be compelled to consent to it.

Athanasios did not have a monopoly on misrepresenting the past for the spiritual benefit of his audience. Jacob would argue that no less than Basil had done the exact same thing:

Know well that it is like the following, O you man who loves toil (sc. φιλόπονος) and who is worthy of mention! It is like the statement the holy Basil made in his homilies on fasting, when he wanted to forbid the drinking of wine to those who were fasting, namely, that there was no wine before the Flood. This, too, is of course not true, since there were vines and the human mind—that discoverer of necessary things—was not inactive for that entire period of two thousand years or more and did not come up with this necessary invention of squeezing out wine from grapes and make for itself this essential and pleasant drink.

Just as there must have been wine before the Flood, so too must there have been writing. For Jacob, it was simply not plausible to hold otherwise:

[499] See e.g. his comments in his third letter to John of Litarb, BL Add. 12,172, fol. 82a (NB: on the same page, he also refers to Cyril of Alexandria as a ‘wise physician of souls,’ (ܐܣܝܐ ܚܟܝܡܐ ܕܢܦ̈ܫܬܐ)) and in his fifth letter to John of Litarb, BL Add. 12,172, fol. 85a.

I am saying the same thing about this invention of letters and writing—it is indispensable. In reality, it is the craft which is above all [other] crafts. Know well, O man, that the mind of humans did not remain throughout that entire period without the discovery of letters.

This whole discussion, however, had more than just an academic tinge to it.

Underlying it was the very real question of the authenticity of the Book of Enoch.

Let this be believed by you: both wine was discovered by the people at that time and they also made writing and letters for themselves and moreover, so far as the book of Enoch is concerned, some have cited it since the times of the Apostles. Jude the Apostle brought forth evidence from it in his catholic epistle. That there was writing, therefore, before Moses, the written stories which are cited by the Jews demonstrate: they are not false. Concerning Moses, they state that his father Amram taught him writing and Hebrew letters along with the writing of the Egyptians while he was a child and still in the house of Pharoah. From this, we have a basis to say that there really was writing and letters before Moses.[500]

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[500] Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), pp. ܐ–ܠ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܝܬ ܓܠܝܦܬܐ ܐܫܟܚܬ. ܕܐܢ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܠܗ ܐܬܘܬܗ ܗܝ ܕܟܬܒܬܐ: ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܣܦܪܐ ܘܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܩܕܡ ܡܘܫܐ. ܘܠܡܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܬܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܡܪܬ: ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܥܡ ܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܕܟܬܒܐ. ܐܦ ܓܒܪ ܘܐܦ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܡܪܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܒ. ܘܐܦ ܡܟܝܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܠܗ ܠܡܕܝܢܐ ܐܬܬܐܣܘܗܝ: ܗܘ ܓܒܪܐ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܘܕܪܫܪܫܬ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܟܠܗ ܒܪܬܐ ܕܟܬܒܗ ܡܬܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ. ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܐܬܠܗܝ: ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܓܒܪܐ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܐܬܠܗܘܢ ܗܘܐ ܘܟܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܐܡܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ: ܘܟܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܦܐܪ: ܡܛܠ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܗܘ ܘܟܠ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܕܢܦܪ: ܘܟܠ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܐܠܠܬܐ ܗ̄, ܘܦܣܝܩܬ ܠܥܪܒ. ܘܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܐܚܪ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܟܠܠ: ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܟܒܕ ܦܘܕܐ ܟܬܠܗܘ̈. ܀ . ܒܕ ܓܒܪ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܥܒܕ ܒܡܘܬܬܗ ܕܡܕܝܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ: ܘܡܢ ܩܕܡ ܗܘܘ ܟܠܗ. ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܒܢܘܗ: ܘܟܢܘܫ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕ̈ܚܠܝܦܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܘܡܫܬܠܡܐ: ܘܟܠܢܫ ܫܪܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܬܦܬܚܘ ܠܥܘܠܬ ܐܬܘܬܐ ܕܐܬܪ̈ܗܘܢ: ܘܥܡ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕ̈ܚܠܝܦܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܬܚܪܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܫܪܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܐܦ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܚܠܝܦܐ ܕܢܘܚ. ܒܕ ܡܢ ܟܐ ܗܘ ܓܒܪܐ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܟܕܝܠܗ ܐܘܣܐ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܘܡܢ ܢܘܚܐ: ܕܡܢ ܟܐ ܕܢܬܬܣܝܡ ܠܟܠ ܡܬܟܬܒܢܘܬܗ ܕܟܬܒܐ: ܘܟܕ ܠܐ ܕܕܦ ܟܠܐ ܠܗ ܟܬܟܠܗ ܐܦ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܡܟܬܒܢܘܬܐ: ܘܡܢ ܡܫܬܟܚܢܘܬܐ ܒܝܬ ܘܡܢ ܡܬܬܪܢܝܬܐ: ܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܢܟܬܒ ܐܢܘܢ ܡܢ ܢܬܦܘܬܐ ܘܦܘܪܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܬܪ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕ̈ܚܠܝܦܐ. ܟܠܗ ܘܦܣܩܝ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܢܫܝܐ. ܘܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܫܪܝܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܐܦ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܪܝܪܝܢ. ܘܥܡ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܠܝܢ. ܘܐܦ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܢܘܚ ܕܐܬܬܘܗܝ, ܫܪܝܪܐ. ܒܕ ܐܡܪ̈ ܒܢܘܚܐ ܡܢ ܐ ܓܒܪ̈ܬܗ ܐܪܣܛܘܛܠܝܣ: ܕܡܢ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܢܘܚ. ܒܕ ܐܦܠܐ ܣܦܪܐ ܘܟܬܒܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܩܕܡ ܠܦܘܠܐ܀ ܗܕܕܐ ܗ̄, ܡܛܠܬܐ ܗ̄, ܕܐܡܪ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܡܪܗܘܛܝܣ. ܘܠܐ ܒܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܬܟܠܐ ܩ̈ܕܡܝܬܐ ܘܟܬܠܬܐ ܦܘܬܗܬܐ ܐܡܪܗ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܟܠܦܘܪܗܘ ܢܬܐܟܝ ܟܠܝܐ ܕܢܥܠܡ ܠܗ܀ ܐܟܬܘܒܗ ܕܝܢ ܕܗܕܐ ܐܬܠܗܝ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܒ: ܐܦ ܓܒܪܐ ܕܢܩܡ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܘܢܘܚܐ ܠܟܬܠܬܒ. ܐܦ ܗ̄, ܕܐܡܪ ܡܕܝܢܐ ܟܐܘܣܛܝܘܣ ܒܟܐܡܪ ܗܘܢ ܕܟܠ ܝܢ ܘܡܟܐ: ܒܕ ܡܢ ܟܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܒܠܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܢܚܡܝ ܥܡܝܐ ܕܣܦܪܐ: ܕܐܦܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܣܦܪܐ ܩܕܡ ܠܦܘܠܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܓܒܪ ܗܕܐ ܐܬܠܗܝ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܦܘܪܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܘܠܐ ܦܟܝܪ ܗܘܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܗܘ ܡܫܟܚܢܐ ܕܝ ܟܬܘܬܐ ܐܠܝܢ ܡܬܐ: ܟܠܗ ܕܟܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܪ ܐܠܦܝ ܕܢܫܢܐ ܘܡܬܪ: ܘܠܐ ܡܟܟܢ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܡܚܫܒܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܐܠܝܢ ܡܬܐ: ܕܢܚܘ ܐܘ ܣܦܪܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܟܐ: ܘܢܓܒܐ ܠܗ ܥܡܝܐ ܗܢܐ ܐܠܝܢ ܟܐ ܘܡܢܟܝܐ. ܗ̄, ܒܕ ܗ̄, ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ: ܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܚܡܫܬܐ ܕܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܘܣܦܪܐ ܐܠܝܢ ܟܐ: ܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܒܢܪܪܐ ܗ̄, ܕܠܟܠ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܘܡ̈ܢܘܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܦܟܝܪ ܗܘܐ ܗܘܢܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܟܠܗ ܙܒܢܐ ܗܘ: ܕܠܐ ܚܡܫܬܐ ܕܟܬܝܒܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܒ ܐܘ ܓܒܪܐ: ܘܡܬܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܗܕܐ: ܕܐܦ ܚܡܪܐ ܐܫܟܚܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܕܗܝܕܝܢ: ܘܐܦ ܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܘܣܦܪܐ ܒܒܕܘ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܐܦ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܚܢܘܟ ܐܝܬ ܕܡܬܬܐܬܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܙܒܢܝ ܕܫܠܝ̈ܚܐ: ܗܘ

Jacob was also very aware of the precarious nature of textual transmision and that books could be lost in the course of time: the Church of his day was only in possession of a fraction of what had been written in previous ages. Jacob's interest in lost books was such that he is reported to have faked a conversion to Judaism at one point in order to discover new-old books. He was convinced that Jews had kept certain books away from the pagans and for themselves and wanted to translate their secrets into Syriac.[501] In his *Commentary on the Pentateuch*, Jacob would refer to the 'story of the Hebrews' when discussing a passage.[502] John of Litarb was also aware that there were books written by important figures in sacred history which were no longer extant. At another point in his thirteenth letter to John of Litarb, Jacob takes up another question from John: there were books of Solomon which he had heard or read about, but which he had not seen:

> Along with all these things which have been stated, now let these other items be set down, for the sake of your repose, O brother, which are really great frivolities and from which there is no profit in speaking. 'What are these three thousand proverbs which, it is written, Solomon spoke? What thousand and

ܕܥܡܗ ܐܢܬ، ܬܫܘܒܬܐ ܡܫܕܪܐ ܥܠܝܟܐ ܠܟ ܒܪܬܗ ܡܬܬܠܝܡܐ. ܕܐܢܬ ܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܣܦܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܩܒܠܐ ܬܫܡܫܝܢ ܠܠܝܠܘܬܐ. ܐܦ ܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܒܠܬܒܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܬܬܝܡ ܡܢ ܠܗܬ ܢܘܕܥܐ ܘܠܗ ܕ ܒܠܬܐ ܐܬܬܣܡ. ܕܐܡܪܝ ܐܦ ܡܠܠ ܡܟܫܐ: ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܦ ܒܐܡܪܐܡ ܐܟܡܐ، ܣܦܪܐ ܘܒܠܬܒܬܐ ܒܒܬܝܬܐ ܒܡ ܣܦܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܝܢ: ܒܗ ܐܬܬܘܗܝ، ܠܠܝܢ ܒܕܒܠ ܒܒܬܘܬܗ ܕܦܪܒܢ. ܐܡܒܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܡܢ ܗܘܕܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܝ ܠܡܟܡܪ. ܕܬܪܝܐܬ ܐܬ ܗܘܐ ܣܦܪܐ ܘܒܠܬܒܬܐ ܡܢܡ ܡܟܫܐ܀ FT available in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' pp. 206-208.

[501] This story is reported in the Armenian version of the history of Michael the Syrian. See V. Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand, patriarche des Syriens jacobites* (Venice, 1868), pp. 20-21. NB: the comments about different versions of the Scriptures which are also made: 'Les espirits critiques ne doivent pas s'étonner de trouver dans la supputation des temps, des intervalles d'années plus ou moins longs, car nour rencontrons beaucoup des divergences dans la version des Septante et dans les écrits d'autres interprètes, et notamment dans la traduction que le roi Abgare fit faire par ordre de Saint Thadée. Cette version fut revisée par Jacques d'Édesse qui se fit Juif, supposant que les Juifs, par jalousie, n'avaient pas volu communiquer tous leurs livres aux païens.' cf. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 3, (London, 1872), p. xxii, n and K.-E. Rignell, *A Letter from Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite of Litarb Concerning Ecclesiastical Canons* (Lund, 1979), p. 23. Also cf. Langlois, *Chronique de Michel le Grand*, pp. 244-245: 'Saint Jacques vivait à cette époque, il était né dans la province d'Antioche; c'était un homme rayonnant de grâce et ami des sciences' il fut nommé évêque d'Edesse et feignet de se faire juif, afin d'avoir le moyen de traduire leurs secrets en langue syriaque.'

[502] See Mingana 147, fol. 4b.

> five songs? What is the discourse he gave on trees and roots and on cattle and birds, and on reptiles and fish, and on the remainder of other things?'

Jacob, too, was aware that Solomon had written many works, but he lacked any information about the precise number and even his Jewish informants were unable to provide him with detailed information about Solomonic bibliography:

> That the man [sc. Solomon] composed, O man who loves toil (sc. φιλόπονος), we have heard and read; but none of the commentators has transmitted to us concerning which are the books in which [Solomon] wrote, or as to what they are called, nor have we heard [about this] from a person of the Hebrews. Moreover, we do not know how to speak about what has not come down to us and which has not been handed over to us.

Jacob did not find it surprising that some books which Solomon had written had not been transmitted to the present. This was the case for other sacred authors as well and Jacob attached a theological interpretation to this state of philological affairs: we possess those books which God wanted us to have.

> Do not be surprised when you hear that all the books which Solomon composed in his wisdom have not come down to us, for even holy books which Moses wrote and those of the prophets have not come down to us, but rather, [we have] only the parts of these which God permitted Ezra the priest to rescue and write down and organize so that they be transmitted and come down to us, that by them and from them we might learn the knowledge of those things which are proper. Furthermore, not even everything Ezra wrote has come down to us: of the 90 books which it is written and stated that he composed, only those which are read out in church have come down to us.

Jacob also speculated as to why God might not permit certain books to survive. A recurring notion in many of his letters is that of the spiritual profit or *yūthrānā* of his recipient.[503] In terms of lost writings, he deploys this same idea to explain their

[503] For examples of Jacob's use of the notion of *yūthrānā*, see Schröter 'Erster Brief Jakob's von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,' p. 268, ln. 2 (Letter 1); BL Add. 12,172, fol. 81a, ln. 23 (Letter 2), fol. 83a, ln. 10 (Letter 4). See also MS Mardin 310, fol. 208a, ln. 2 (letter to Addai the priest which has been excerpted as a source of canons). Also cf. Mardin 310, fol. 212b, ln. 28, fol. 213b, ln. 5 and BL Add. 12,144, fol. 114b (a scholion of Jacob on Ecclesiastes preserved in the *Catena* of Severos).

disappearance. Certain texts did not survive because they had nothing profitable—*yūthrānā*—in them.

> Know, therefore: neither have the books of Solomon come down to us; perhaps there was nothing profitable for the soul in them, otherwise, they would have come down. Maybe, it was for this reason that God ordained that they not be transmitted.

Another possible explanation of lost writings was that of redundancy or overlap. Perhaps the same things contained in texts which no longer survived were preserved in other writings; though we have lost some compositions, their contents have come down to us in other vessels, so to speak.

> Perhaps there was in these things which were about trees and roots and animals and birds and reptiles and fish a certain knowledge for the craft of bodily medicine, like what we find in these [books] which are among the Greeks and Egyptians since, as regards the proverbs and wise sayings that it is written he composed, it is known that some of them are those which we possess and read; we neither count them nor do we reckon and see how many they are in the Book of Proverbs which we possess.

John had written to Jacob stating that there were 1,005 songs of Solomon, but as in the case where John had had a Biblical manuscript which corrupted certain names, John's numbers here were inaccurate and Jacob had to correct him.

> Now concerning the songs [of Solomon], I have already remarked and will inform you, O brother who is worthy of mention, that it is not 1,005 but 5,000 songs that we have in our possession, so that when you have learned this, it will not be demanded of me to say which ones they are, since you see all this abundantly diffused wisdom of Solomon, and you will pardon my feebleness.[504]

[504] Syriac text in W. Wright, 'Two Epistles of Mār Jacob, Bishop of Edessa,' *Journal of Sacred Literature and Biblical Record* 10 (1867), pp. ܟܐ-ܟܒ. ܒܪ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܐܬܐܡܪ ܠܡܬܬܩܝܡܘ ܡܛܠ ܢܦܫܐ ܕܐܣܘܦܬܝܢ: ܘܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܣ̈ܛܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܥܒܠܬ: ܕܐܬܬܘܣܡ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܥܙܙܐ ܫ̈ܥܒܐ ܬܠܬܪܐ: ܘܕܠܐ ܐܢܬ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܘܬܪ̈ܓܡܐ ܕܡܠܬܐ ❖ ܕܡܢܐ ܠܡ ܐܬܬܣܝܡܘ܆ ܬܠܬܐ ܐܠܦܝܢ ܡ̈ܬܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܕܡܠܠ ܫܠܝܡܘܢ܆: ܘܡܢܐ ܠܡ ܐܠܦ ܘܚܡܫ ܬܫ̈ܒܚܬܐ. ܘܡܢܘ ܡܡܠܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܠܠ ܥܠ ܐ̈ܝܠܢܐ ܘܥܠ ܥܩ̈ܪܐ: ܘܥܠ ܒܥܝܪܐ ܘܥܠ ܦ̈ܪܚܬܐ: ܘܥܠ ܪ̈ܚܫܐ ܘܥܠ ܢ̈ܘܢܐ: ܘܥܠ ܫܪܒܐ ܕܐܣܝܘܬܐ ❖ ܕܦܓܪ ܟܒܪܐ ܫܡܝܥ ܘܝܕܝܥ: ܐܘ ܟܒܪܐ ܪܚܝܩ ܒܟܠܗ. ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܬܬܣܝܡܘ܆ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܟܬܒ: ܐܘ ܕܡܢܐ ܡܬܬܣܝܡܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܐܫܟܚ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܡܦ̈ܩܢܘܬܐ: ܐܘ ܫܒܩܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܢܐ ܡܢ ܒܥܬ̈ܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܠܡܐܡܪ: ܗܘ ܡܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܘܬܝ܆ ܘܠܐ ܐܫܬܟܚ ܠܝ . ܘܠܐ ܬܬܕܪܝ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܘ ܠܝ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܚܟܝܡ ܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܒܣܦܪܘܬܗ: ܐܡܪܬ, ܕܫܡܥ ܐܢܬ ܕܐܦܠܐ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܦ̈ܪܫܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܒ ܡܘܫܐ: ܘܐܦܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܢܒ̈ܝܐ ܐܬܘ ܠܝ. ܐܠܐ ܫ̈ܘܬܐܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ. ܗ̈ܢܝܢ ܕܠܒܪܐ

Jacob had spent time in Alexandria 'gathering wisdom,'[505] and perhaps because of his time there, he was aware of the regionally contingent nature of certain church practices. In his canons, he showed an awareness of the different way things were done in Syria, in Egypt and Alexandria, and among the Greeks.[506] Jacob was also aware that rites in the church developed historically: 'Know, then, O spiritual brother of mine,' he wrote to the priest Addai, in response to a question about the rite of the Blessing of the Waters,

> that not all these things which are in this order which now prevails in the churches have taken hold from the beginning among Christian people. They have, rather, slowly increased and been adopted by means of gradual additions and new ideas, till the point that they have attained such a degree of fine harmony and fair construction in the rites which the Church follows in this time, though originally neither the name nor the mention of this rite of the blessing (that is, consecration) of the waters was at all present in the Church, just as even now is still the case among the people of Alexandria and among all those who are in Egypt. Nevertheless, afterwards, when this custom that they bless the waters on the night of this feast [sc. Epiphany] began to be adopted, one by one, priests began to form the habit of saying a short prayer. One would say this [prayer] as he was able and as he knew, but another one [would say] a different one, longer or shorter—in every church, as they knew, in all the

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ܒܥܕܬܐ ܢܩܒ ܐܠܗܐ ܢܥܘܬ ܘܢܚܠܘܬ: ܘܢܦܪܘܫ ܕܢܬܒܩܠ ܘܢܬܐܬܐ ܠܝ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܒܗܝܢ ܘܡܬܚܫܒܢ ܢܬܠܦ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ
ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܩܠܝܢ܀ ܗܘܝ ܕܝܢ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܢܝܢ ܒܢܘܢ ܐܬܪ̈ܐ ܠܝ. ܡܢ ܝ̈ ܒܢܝ ܒܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܕܒܠܚܘܕ ܘܡܬܐܡܪܢܐ
ܕܐܒܗܬܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܒܒܪܬܐ ܐܬܘ ܠܝ. ܡܕܡ ܕܕ: ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܒܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܗܘܢ ܐܬܘ ܠܝ. ܘܐܝܠܝܢ
ܒܒܪ ܡܕܡ ܘܐܬܪܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܠܢܦܫܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܬܘ: ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܒܒܪ ܦܪܘܫ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܦ ܕܠܐ ܢܐܬܘܢ.
ܒܒܪ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗܘܢ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܛܠ ܐܬܠܝܐ ܘܒܡܪܐ ܘܡܫܘܬܐ ܘܦܘܫܩܐ ܘܪܘܫܡܐ ܘܢܘܢܐ: ܢܕܒܟܐ ܡܕܡ
ܠܬܘܡܚܬܐ ܕܐܫܘܝܬܐ ܕܦܚ̈ܪܐ. ܐܝܟ ܡܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܗܘܬ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܘܠܗܘܬ ܡܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܡܬܒܚܪܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ.
ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܒܥܬ ܕܐܦ ܬ̈ܠܬܐ ܘܩܠܐܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܒܢܝ: ܢܕܒܟܐ ܕܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܬܠܝܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܠܝܗܘܢ ܠܝ ܘܦܪܘܫܝܢ:
ܘܠܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ: ܘܠܐ ܫܟܝܚܝܢ ܘܒܝܫܝܢ ܕܒܚܕܐ ܐܬܠܝܗܘܢ. ܒܒܠܬܐ ܗܘ ܕܩܠܐܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܦ
ܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܐܬܒܪܝܬ: ܡܘܕܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܥܢܝܬ ܠܒܠܥܝ. ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܠܦ ܘܝܕܥ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܠܝ.
ܐܠܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܬܫܒܚܬܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܒܪ ܢܠܦ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܕܐ. ܠܐ ܬܬܕܟܪܘܢ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܐܢܝܢ: ܒܪ ܫܢܝܐ ܐܝܬ
ܘܡܟܒܪ ܐܝܬ ܒܠܗ ܗܕܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܬܥܒܕܬܐ ܕܡܬܩܒܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܗܘܢ: ܘܡܐܟܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܠ ܡܫܝܚܘܬ، ܕܝܠܝ FT available in Nau, 'Traduction des lettres XII et XIII,' pp. 275-276.

[505] For Jacob's time in Alexandria, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 445 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 471 (FT): ܘܡܢ ܬܡܢ ܠܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܫܢܝ. ܘܟܕ ܐܓܪ ܙܒܢܐ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܟܠܗ ܬܡܢ ܘܡܟܢܫܬܐ ܚܟܡ ܡܢ ܬܡܢ ܗܦܟ ܠܣܘܪܝܐ ܘܡܛܐ ܠܐܘܪܗܝ، ܡܟܝܠ… 'And from there, he departed for Alexandria and when he had stayed there a certain amount of time and collected wisdom, he returned from there to Syria and arrived in Edessa…'

[506] See, e.g., T.J. Lamy, *Dissertatio de Syrorum fide et disciplina in re eucharistica* (Louvain, 1859), p. 168 and Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 15. In ibid., p. 17, Jacob refers to the practices of ascetic men whom he knows 'in the East.'

churches which are in the region of the Greeks. And afterwards, Proklos, the bishop of the island of Cyprus,[507] a holy man and a teacher, wrote and set down that great prayer which is placed in the rite...at times it was used in the blessing of the waters, as is the case now. Although by itself it suffices for this rite and the ordering of the waters and he would not say another [prayer], he would nevertheless sometimes say it over the waters of baptism, with a slight variation of certain words in it. As for that [prayer] which was accepted by the holy Mar Epiphanios, the archbishop of Cyprus: he added and introduced [new elements] to it, as are in other prayers. [He added] that section [which goes] 'May the head of the serpent be bruised under the seal and type of Your Cross,' as I have found written concerning it in the prayer. He constantly used [the prayer] in holy baptism. Slowly, however, it turned into this version of this rite and these prayers which are in it were put together and arranged. We only see four prayers in it which have been arranged and assembled and handed down, though there are a few, pretty ancient manuscripts in which there are only three prayers...[508]

Conclusion to Part I

Jacob's historical consciousness and critical awareness are remarkable; he is perhaps the most vivid Syriac antecedent to Ḥunayn, but of course is not the only one.

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[507] It is not clear who this Proklos is. There is no mention of a Proklos of Cyprus in Greek texts (see M. Geerard and F. Glorie, edd. *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, vol. 5 (Turnhout, 1987) pp. 96-97) and similarly, a Proklos of Cyprus is unknown in Syriac (see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, index, s.n. Proklos). In both Greek and Syriac, the best-known Proklos is Proklos of Constantinople.

[508] BL Add. 14,715, fols. 170a-170b. ܕܒ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܘ ܐܚܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ. ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܠܡܬܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܐܡܝܕܐ ܗܫܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ: ܡܢ ܥܘܕܪܢܐ ܠܒܢܝܢ ܠܘܬ ܒܪܝܐ ܕܒܪܘܡܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܫܠܝܠ ܒܫܠܝܠ ܙܒܢ ܘܐܬܛܟܣ ܒܗܕ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܘܡܫܚܬܐ ܕܐܡܝܕܐ ܕܐܡܪܢܐ: ܒܥܕܬܐ ܕܫܢܝ ܠܗܕܐ ܒܠܗ ܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܘܠܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܘܬܘܩܢܬܐ ܕܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܠܒܪܟܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܒܪܝܟܐ ܗܢܐ. ܒܗ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ [ܡܕܝܢܬܐ] ܩܦ. ܐܦܠܐ ܫܡܗ ܐܘ ܒܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܨܠܘܬܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܒܘܪܟܐ ܐܘ ܒܝܕ ܡܘܕܥܐ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܥܠ ܟܠܗ ܒܥܕܬܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܫܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܐܬܪܘܬܗ, ܠܘܬ ܒܪܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܘܠܘܬ ܒܠܗܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܗܝܢ ܐܢ. ܒܬܪܟܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܪ ܥܙܪ, ܕܐܬܠܒܢ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܒܪܟܗܘܢ ܡܢܐ ܒܠܠܝܐ ܕܒܥܕܬܐ ܗܢܝܐ. ܚܕܐ ܚܕܐ ܠܘܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܗܢܐ ܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܠܡܬܟܗܢܘ ܕܐܬܡܪܘܢ. ܒܗ ܩܦ ܗܘ ܐܡܪ ܗܢܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕ[ܐ]ܥܒܕ ܗܘܐ ܘܕܒ ܗܘܐ. ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܐܘ ܬܪܬܐ ܐܘ ܐܪܒܥ ܘܕܘܪܬܐ: ܒܟܠ ܥܕܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܢ ܗܘܘ. ܒܒܠܚܘܕ ܩܪܝܬܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܬܪܝܢ ܕܬܘܕܝܬܐ. ܒܬܪܟܢ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܘܩܠܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܩܘܦܪܘܣ ܓܙܪܬܐ: ܓܒܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܐ: ܒܗ ܒܝܕ ܘܣܡ ܠܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܪܒܬܐ ܕܣܝܡܐ ܒܗ ܒܨܠܘܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܐܬܬܣܝܡ, ܪܡܫ. ܪܒܐ ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܡܢܐ ܘܐܬܬܚܝܡ ܒܒܢܝܢ. ܒܙܒܢ ܩܦ ܡܬܬܚܫܚ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܒܠ ܒܘܪܟܐ ܕܡܝܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܫܐ. ܒܗ ܗܝ, ܒܠܚܘܕܝܗ ܣܦܩܐ ܠܗ ܠܗܕܐ ܬܘܩܢܐ ܘܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܘܬܘܩܢܐ ܕܡܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܕܡܫܬܚܠܦܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ. ܒܡ ܥܕܬܐ ܘܒܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܕܗܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܗ. ܠܗ; ܐܝܕܐ ܕܡܩܒܠܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܡܪܝ, ܐܦܝܦܢܝܘܣ ܪܝܫ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܩܘܦܪܘܣ. ܐܘܣܦ ܐܥܠ ܒܗ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܝܬ ܠܘܬܐ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ: ܗܝ ܕܡܬܒܪܝ ܗܝ ܪܫܗ ܕܚܘܝܐ ܬܚܝܬ ܚܬܡܐ ܠܬܘܬ ܡܢ ܪܘܫܡܐ ܘܛܘܦܣܐ ܕܝ ܠܨܠܝܒܟ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܫܟܚܬ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܡܛܠܬܗ ܠܘܬ ܕܝ ܠܘܬܐ. ܒܗ ܐܡܬܚܡܠܬ ܡܬܬܚܫܚ ܗܘܐ ܥܠ ܥܡܕܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܒܬܪܟܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܫܠܝܠ ܫܠܝܠ ܐܬܐ ܠܗܕܐ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܗܢܐ. ܘܐܬܠܒܟ ܘܐܬܛܟܣ ܐܪܒܥܐ ܬܝ ܠܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܗ.. ܐܪܒܥ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܬܝ ܠܘܬܐ ܚܙܝܢ ܒܗ. ܕܛܟܝܣܢ, ܘܬܟܝܫܢ, ܘܐܫܠܡܢܢ,. ܒܗ ܐܝܬ ܫܪܒܬܐ ܡܢ ܝ ܫܚܝܐ ܕܒܠܝܠ ܥܬܝܩܐ ܒܠܚܘܕܝܗܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܬܠܬ ܬܝ ܠܘܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. See also T.J. Lamy, *Dissertatio de Syrorum fide et disciplina in re eucharistica* (Louvain, 1859), p. 100, for Jacob speaking about a custom having 'previously taken hold in this region of the East.' ܩܕܡ ܐܚܕ ܒܥܕܐ ܐܬܪܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ

Because Syriac-speaking Christians found themselves in a situation where their normative religious texts were written in languages which differed from the language they spoke, studied and prayed in, there is a sense in which translation, re-translation and increasing philological exactitude and concern would eventually become inevitable and unavoidable, at least among Christian communities with a scripturalist bent or in which theological disagreement rooted in the interpretation of the Bible became heated. And an upshot of the critical-philological turn the Syriac tradition took was the emergence of groups of scholars who had a set of skills that could be applied to the translation of other texts from Greek. Muslim patrons who sought to have Greek texts rendered into Arabic, therefore, might be seen as something like a rugby coach looking for rugby players who has the good fortune of stumbling upon an American football team. Such an analogy is slightly misleading, however, since many of the sorts of texts that were translated in the Greco-Arabic translation movement—philosophical and medical—had already been rendered into Syriac before the 'Islamic' period. But the broader point remains: When Ḥunayn sat down to write his *Risāla*, the critical awareness and philological technique he had at his disposal were, like medical and philosophical study, things which had deep roots in the Syriac tradition of which he was a member.

Several larger points come out of this recognition. Dimitri Gutas' important and otherwise excellent *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, for example, is unfortunately marred by regular, clumsy attempts to downplay the importance of the Syriac contribution to the fabled Greco-Arabic translation movement.[509] Such attempts raise the question of

[509] In addition to problems I have already discussed, one can offer the following as well. Gutas cites Brock's observation that more Greek material was translated into Armenian than into Syriac as a

Syriac and Syriac sources in our understanding of the Late Antique and early medieval Middle East. How should scholars attempt to integrate these sources into our narratives? And more broadly: who speaks for the Syrians?[510] Gutas can be forgiven for his biases against the Syriac tradition: though he can perhaps read some Syriac, he is not a Syriacist and his efforts, such as they are, to speak about the subject reveal he has no profound acquaintance with Syriac language, culture and history; in this respect, he is quite typical of scholars writing about the history of the Late Antique and early medieval Middle East. His attempts to represent the Syriac tradition and give it voice (or, as the case may be, take that voice away) therefore are representative of a host of similar attempts by scholars from different disciplines—usually in Byzantine or Islamic studies—who try (at least sometimes) to speak for Syriac-speaking Christians without really knowing what those Christians said and wrote and while lacking a serious knowledge of their traditions.[511]

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way of suggesting that much ado should not be made about the pre-Islamic Greco-Syriac achievement (Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 22, n. 17). Such a point, of course, is misleading for the simple reason that none of the Greco-Arabic translators were Armenians, whereas nearly all of them were Syriac-speaking Christians. The comparison with Armenian is as useful as a comparison with Latin or Coptic (or Chinese, for that matter) would be—it is an interesting point, but insofar as there was not a population of Armenians in ʻAbbasid Baghdad or even under ʻAbbasid rule, whom Muslim elites were turning to for translation services, it is ultimately not germane. Armenian is not closely related to Arabic and it is not immediately obvious that being the heir to a finely-honed tradition of half a millennium of translation from Greek into Armenian would have made one especially well equipped to render Greek texts into Arabic. This hardly needs pointing out and is to a certain extent irrelevant: Gutas's not-so-secret aim is to credit the Muslim patrons who paid for the translations for the cultural achievement of the translation movement (see, e.g., Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture*, p. 141). As I attempted to show with the Western case of the Council of Vienne, having the funding and desire for language study or translation is simply not enough if there is no one with the actual know-how to actualize those wishes.

[510] By which I mean the Aramaic/Syriac-speaking Christians of the Middle East.

[511] This is especially true in the case of scholars who know Arabic: the similarlity and comparative ease of reading Syriac once one has spent long hours learning the intricacies of Arabic can easily seduce one into thinking that he or she is qualified to speak with confidence about a field with which one has relatively little experience and familiarity. This false sense of expertise is especially perilous once one realizes that Syriac studies is a field which is still relatively underdeveloped and in which many important texts remain untranslated and even unedited. For these reasons, a little bit of Syriac can be a dangerous thing.

This is no trifling matter, either, for we are not dealing with a small and insignificant minority group when we talk about about Syriac-speaking Christians. I will take the point up later in this dissertation, but we should not forget that these communities comprised the majority of the population of the Middle East in the Late Antique and early medieval period. Gutas' efforts to represent the Syriac tradition consequently bring to the fore the larger question of how the voices and existence of these Christians are (not) integrated into our understanding of the region's history in this period and how this (non) integration distorts our understanding of the early medieval Middle East. The question of these Christian groups and the role they are given in our historical narratives is one of immense importance and is something to which I will return.

A second important point arises out of the evidence that has been amassed in these first three chapters, one which relates to the question of how we think about Late Antique culture in general. One way to take the evidence I have presented in my first three chapters is as a simple assertion of Syrian and Syriac exceptionalism. In the face of the standard seventh-century script of Byzantine studies, one which lists certain Greek genres has having taken a hiatus and lists other (newer, Christian) genres as flourishing, I have, it might appear, simply and vigorously waved a flag from Syria and said, 'Not here! Not here!' And, to an extent, this is precisely what I have done: I have attempted to show that narratives which take for granted the decline or transformation of Byzantine literature between the sixth and ninth-century suffer from a certain myopia: they are impoverished by their implicit understanding that 'Byzantine literature' and 'Greek literature' are coterminous. If, however, we broaden

our concept of Byzantine literature to include other languages of the empire which—through translations from Greek and by virtue of a shared way of life and common experiences of Byzantine rule—were direct partakers and participants in Byzantine high culture, the dramatic nature of the abatement of certain genres seems much less dramatic. On this view, talk of a Byzantine Dark Age proves unsatisfying when measured by its own standards.

But the signifcance of the Syriac evidence goes even deeper than this: more than make us aware of the Syriac world, so to speak, next door, it recasts our understanding of the importance of the changes in Greek literature which scholars like Lemerle, Kazhdan and Cameron have pointed to. We have seen that the Syrians held on to some secular Greek genres—most notably philosophy and medicine, but they also continued to write history, had an interest in science, and even dabbled in Homer and studied rhetoric[512]—but they did not hold on to other genres—say, epigrams, imperial panegyric and certain kinds of literature. One way of construing this evidence is to read it as suggesting that the things which Syriac-speaking Christians held on to and continued throughout the so-called Dark Age were those things which were actually held by large parts of Late Antique society to be more important and useful than the hyper-urban, rhetorical genres that did not fare so well as the Empire passed through the straights of the seventh century. Perhaps the loss or abatement of these things was not such a great loss, at least in the eyes of educated contemporaries, after all?

What the Syrian evidence does for us is cast into stark relief the literary priorities and tastes many of the educated in late antiquity actually had: though

[512] See J.W. Watt, ed. and trans., *The Fifth Book of the Rhetoric of Antony of Tagrit* (CSCO 480-481: SS 203-204) (Louvain, 1986). On Anton of Takrit (fl. 9th century), see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 278.

humanists and classicists in the West have for centuries often gravitated towards the texts produced by ancient experts in rhetoric, not everybody actually living at that time necessarily shared this value judgement. On this reading of the situation, we would see the fullness of Late Antique high culture as extending well beyond the sort of things produced by men trained in rhetoric. There were many career options, so to speak, which lay before wealthy youth who had the leisure and resources to pursue an education. Rhetoric was just one and was not necessarily the default choice. In the late fourth century, for example, we find Libanios complaining that boys from good backgrounds who traditionally would have received a rhetorical education in Antioch were instead rushing off to Beirut to be trained in law.[513] Similarly, well before Libanios' complaint, one could also point to the example of Galen: the son of a rich architect, it has been suggested that he could have taken the career path of a sophist or simply become a man of means and leisure. Instead, he chose to pursue medicine. The things he wrote certainly garnered the attention of others and of posterity, too: Nutton estimated that Galen's works account for 10% of all extant Greek literature written before AD 350.[514] Certainly no writer of the Second Sophistic which Galen might have been a part of had he elected to do so, can claim such a staggering figure.

What the Syriac evidence does is relativize the importance of the cessation of certain literary activities as one strand in a larger garment of Late Antique elite culture. If these activities were perhaps not as central to Late Antique high culture as we

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[513] See A.F. Norman, trans., *Antioch as a Centre of Hellenic Culture as Observed by Libanius* (Liverpool, 2001), p. 95. For this point and discussion of Libanios' comments, see C. Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 10-11.

[514] For Galen as a possible sophist or wealthy gentleman, see V. Nutton, *Ancient Medicine* (London, 2004), p. 218, and more generally on his background, see pp. 216-218. For Galen as author of some 10% of extant Greek literature written before AD 350, see *ibid*., p. 390, n. 22.

thought, the loss of at least some of them in the sixth, seventh and eighth centuries should not be seen as being as all that significant after all. One thread may have been pulled away, but the larger garment still remained. And with this understanding, the world of Ḥunayn, in which medical, philosophical and scientific texts were the focus of scholarly energy would have been as or even more continuous with the Age of the Antonines in its interests and priorities than the world of a figure like Libanios. What would make the Syrians exceptional therefore is not that they had an interest in such things, but rather that they continued a broader Late Antique interest in them longer than anybody else.[515]

Which brings me to the question of why: what was it about Syria that allowed a sophisticated culture of scholarship and translation to develop and flourish when and where it did? Can I provide some sort of social or economic context that might explain this efflorescence? Moreover, what exactly have I meant when I have spoken of an unbroken Late Antique tradition? To attempt to answer these questions, we must head north from Baghdad, along the Euphrates to a monastery called the Eagles' Nest which was the epicenter of much of the Syriac-language scholarship of the early Middle Ages. Trying to understand this place, we will perhaps at last find some answers.

[515] I am heavily indebted to the comments, suggestions and words of Peter Brown for the ideas in the previous four paragraphs.

Part II: Identity Politics: Society in the Early Medieval Middle East

Chapter 4: Canon Fodder[516]

In the first section of this dissertation, I have attempted to sketch out two phenomena which characterized the Late Antique and early Medieval Middle East. The first relates to the 'Dark Ages' when viewed from Arabic and Syriac sources: at the same time that certain types of Greek literature were at their nadir, some of precisely the same genres, most notably philosophy, were flourishing and reached their zenith in Syriac. This thriving is related to a second phenomenon: between roughly the fourth to ninth centuries, the Middle East witnessed the translation of a large amount of Greek literature into Syriac and the eventual development of a highly refined and subtle Greek-into-Syriac translation technique. By the late seventh century, a sophisticated culture of scholarship existed among Miaphysites in Syria. At the same time as these two phenomena were taking place in the Middle East, a third was occurring as well: what might be called the region's gradual sectarianization. Michael Morony has noted that one of the most important transformations in Middle Eastern society between the fourth and ninth centuries was the shift from a society where personal identity was a matter of 'language, occupation, or geographical location' to a society where the most important aspect of identity was a religious one. For Morony, the shift to a 'society composed of religious communities' 'is fundamental to the formation of Islamic society

[516] I have presented portions of this second section of my dissertation in the papers 'You are What You Read: Qenneshre and the Miaphysite Church in the Seventh Century,' (at the Corpus Christi Classical Seminar in Oxford, March 4, 2009) and as 'Jacob of Edessa and His Hexaemeron,' (as part of the Princeton Religion Department's Spring 2010 workshop in Late Antiquity and later at the Religion in Late Antiquity Colloquium under the same name). These papers are eventually to be published in collected volumes, the first edited by Philip Wood, the second, edited by Sarit Kattan and Lance Jenott.

and serves as the single most important distinction between Muslim and Hellenistic society.'[517]

I am concerned here with the shift from a Late Roman/Byzantine society to an 'Islamic' one, but Morony's insight will nevertheless prove useful. It is this third phenomenon—the gradual sorting out of Christian communities in the Middle East into increasingly distinct and separate groups—a process that started well before the birth of Islam—that will provide us with the social context needed to make sense of the first two. It is my contention that, so far as Middle Eastern Christians are concerned, these three phenomena—the emergence of religion as the most important aspect of personal identity, the flourishing of certain kinds of Syriac literature in the seventh and eighth centuries and the translation of large amounts of Greek literature into Syriac—are related. My argument will be a very simple one: it was the conflicts generated as the Christians of the Middle East slowly separated themselves into distinct churches that fueled the translation and re-translation of Greek texts and also promoted the flourishing of Syriac literature.

My argument in this section of the dissertation will need to zig-zag back and forth in time a bit, but my ultimate destination will be a monastery called Qenneshre located across the Euphrates River from the town of Jirbās, very close to the modern Syrian-Turkish border.

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[517] See M. Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, 2nd ed., (Piscataway, NJ, 2005), p. 277. NB, in his 'History and Identity in the Syrian Churches,' in J.J. van Ginkel, H.L. Murre-van den Berg, and T.M. van Lint, eds. *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 134) (Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA, 2005), p. 1, Morony places this development between the fifth and seventh/eighth centuries: 'The emergence of separate sectarian group identities among Christians in the Middle East was an historical process that lasted from the fifth century to about the seventh or eighth centuries, but the memory of that process was a powerful factor in the preservation of sectarian group identities.'

Jacob of Edessa and Canon Law

Before we can arrive at Qenneshre, however, I want to make some soundings to try to get a sense for the lay of the religious landscape in the seventh and early eighth century. I would like to look at some of the evidence for the state of inter-Christian relations which can be found in sources which have scarcely been utilized by scholars studying the seventh and early eighth centuries, most importantly, the canons of Jacob of Edessa (d. 708).

After serving as Bishop of Edessa for four years, Jacob quit his post in anger over the widespread neglect of canon law; the year was perhaps 688.[518] Jacob confronted the Patriarch Julian about the lack of observance of church canons, but was advised to go along with the times. Outraged, he burned the book of canon law before the gate of the Patriarch's monastery (probably Qenneshre[519]) yelling out that he was burning something that was superfluous and useless.[520] Jacob would go on to write a treatise against those who dared to transgress the law and trample ecclesiastical canons.

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[518] For a discussion of the possible dates of Jacob's ordination and the conflicting evidence, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 248, n. 3. Also see, O.J. Schrier, 'Chronological problems concerning the lives of Severos bar Mašqā, Athanasios of Balad, Julianus Romāya, Yoḥannān Sābā, George of the Arabs and Jacob of Edessa, *Oriens Christianus* 75 (1991), pp. 66, 74. Neither Bar Hebraeus (cf. J.-B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy, edd., *Gregorii Barhebraei: Chronicon Eccleisiasticum*, vol. 1, (Louvain, 1872), co. 289), nor Michael the Syrian (cf. J.-B. Chabot, ed. and trans., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, 1166-1199, (Paris, 1899-1910), IV 445 = II 471 (FT)) give the exact year of Jacob's ordination, but both state that his tenure as Bishop of Edessa lasted four years. H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord: Jacob of Edessa's Response to Islam,' *Aram* 6 (1994), p. 107, states that it was 684 without offering any evidence for this view, though this is the date which Schrier argues for in *ibid*., p. 74.

[519] In the life of Theodota of Amid, we see Patriarch Julian living at the monastery of Qenneshre. See St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 547b (section 13 in my edition).

[520] J.-B. Chabot, ed. and trans., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, 1166-1199, (Paris, 1899-1910), IV 445-446 = II 471-472 (FT). ܘܟܕ ܠܐ ܫܒܩܗ ܛܢܢܗ. ܘܚܡܝܡܘܬܐ ܕ[ܬ]ܪܝܨܘܬܗ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ. ܐܫܬܐܠ ܡܢܗ ܕܪܥܝܘܬܐ ܘܐ ܫܠܡܗ ܠܟܘܪܣܝܐ. ܠܒܪ، ܗܠܝܢ ܦ̈ܓܪܐ. ܘܐܙܠ ܠܗ ܠܘܬ ܬܠܡܝܕܘ̈ܗܝ. ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܘܬ ܝܘܠܝܢܐ. ܗܘܝܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܐ. ܘܐܬܚܙܝ، ܒܗ ܦ̈ܓܪܐ ܘܐܦ̈ܝܩܘܬ ܡܠܠܗ، ܕܬܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܒܬܪܥܐ. ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܒܥܝܬܗ. ܐܠܐ ܕܒܠܚܘܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܘܕܠܗܘܢ ܒܬܪܢܐ ܢܦܫ ܡܠܟܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ. ܘܡܠܘܐܐ ܠܚܠܒܐ ܕܩܢܘܢܐ ܒܛܠܝܢܐ ܐܡܪ. ܘܩܡ ܬܪܥܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܦ̈ܓܪܐ ܐܘܩܕܗ ܒܢܘܪܐ. ܟܕ ܩܥܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܐܡܪ. ܕܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܡܬܒܥܝܢ ܠܟ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܬܢܛܪܝܢ. ܐܝܟ ܕܝܬܝܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܚܫܚܝܢ ܒܢܘܪܐ ܡܘܩܕܢܐ... '...and when his zeal and the fervor of his belief did not permit him to endure [these things], he resigned from his

The complete work is now lost, but excerpts from its twelfth chapter have been preserved in two different manuscripts in the British Library.[521] What survives of the twelfth chapter of this otherwise-lost treatise casts light on Jacob's understanding of the very nature of Christianity and the importance of the law to its true practice. For Jacob, Christianity as a religion was actually older than any other religion—paganism, Judaism, 'barbarianism,'—it was something as old as creation itself. Christianity was nothing more than the covenant between God and humans.[522] This covenant between God and humans had been established a number of different times—no less than six: God established a covenant with Adam in Eden when he commanded him not to eat the fruit of the tree; the covenant was established a second time with Adam and his

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congregation and entrusted his see to Mar Julian the Patriarch and left with two of his disciples, Daniel and Constantine. For before he left, he had argued with the Patriarch and bishops about their observing ecclesiastical canons, but nobody listened to him at all. Instead, they were counseling him to consent to all things according to the age and happenings. On account of this, he brought forth the book of ecclesiastical canons and burned it with fire before the door of the patriarchal monastery, crying out and saying: 'It is these canons which are trampled upon by you and not observed that I am burning like things which are superfluous and useless...' cf. the ET available in S.P. Brock, *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature*, p. 269.

[521] See BL Add., 12,154, fol. 164b ܡܢ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܚܘܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܪܝܐ ܘܡܚܒܪ، ܥܠ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܕܫܝܢ ܠܩܢܘܢܐ ܥܕܬܢܝܐ. Cp. with BL Add. 17,193, fol. 58a: ܬܘܒ ܡܢ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܚܘܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܪܝܐ ܘܡܚܒܪ، ܥܠ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܡܢ ܡܦܠܐܘܢ ܕܝ̈ܢ ... Both these mss. preserve only excerpts from chapter 12 of Jacob's work, which is otherwise now completely lost (cf. also A. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur* (Bonn, 1922), p. 254).

[522] See BL Add. 12,154, fol. 165a: ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܘ ܡܕܡ ܡܥܠܝܐ ܘܐܠܝܨ ܗ̇ܘ: ܘܫܡܗܐ ܡܝܩܪܐ ܘܚܫܝܚܐ. ܐܦ ܡܣܬܒܪܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܘܐܚܪܝܬܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܘܕܚܠܬܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܟܝܬ ܗ̇ܝ، ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܘܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܢܐ ܕܐ̇ܢ ܐܢܐ. ܘܕܩܕܝܡܐ ܡܢ ܒܪܒܪܝܘܬܐ ܘܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܘܝܗܘܕܝܘܬܐ. ܘܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܥܝܬܐ ܘܕܚܠܬܐ ܕܐܝܬܝ ܚܘܫܒܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܐܡܪ ܫܘܝܬ ܒܪܒܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܠܒܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܒܚܕܝܘܬܗ̇. ܐܦ ܒܙܒ̈ܢܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܝܐ ܢܣܒܬ ܠܗܢܐ ܫܘܡܗܐ ܡܝܩܪܐ ܘܡܫܒܚܐ. ܡܢ ܐܡܬܝ، ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܦܪܘܩ ܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܩܢ ܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܘܦܪܩ ܠܢ. ܘܟܕ ܠܟܠܗ̇ ܐܠܦ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܥܒܕ ܠܢ ܣܓܘ̈ܕܐ ܫܪ̈ܝܪܐ ܕܐܠܗܘܬܐ. ܚܢܢ ܠܢ ܐܦ ܒܫܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܪܒܐ ܘܬܡܝܗܐ. ܡܢܘ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ. 'Christianity is an exalted and necessary thing and an exalted and venerable name. Although it is thought to be something new and later than all the ways of life and religions of humans, it is, as I judge, the first and most ancient and that which is older than barbarianism, and paganism and Judaism, and all the doctrines and religions which the mind of humans have introduced into this world, and it is, so to speak, equal in age to the creation of human beings, even if it has taken up this noble and venerated appellation in recent times, from the point when Christ our Savior, for the sake of our salvation, became a human and delivered us. When he had taught us all the true knowledge of God and made us true worshipers of the Divinity, he bestowed upon us this great and marvelous name. For what is Christianity save the covenant of God with humans?'

children after Adam's sin; the covenant was established a third time with Noah and his children; a fourth time, with Abraham and Isaac; a fifth time, with the children of Israel by means of Moses. The sixth establishment of the covenant was done by God himself, in the person of Christ.[523]

The Last-Chance Covenant[524]

The seventh and final covenant between God and humanity, Jacob writes, will come at the end of the world, when God judges each person according to his or her deeds and rewards or punishes him or her accordingly. The time of the coming of the seventh covenant will be like that of the previous six: when God sees His covenant

[523] cf. BL Add. 12,154, fols. 165a-165b [bracketed parts taken from BL Add. 17,193, fol. 58b]: ܡܟܝܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܡܢ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܒܪܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܠܒܪܢܫܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܒܨܠܡܗ. ܘܣܡܗ ܒܦܪܕܝܣܐ ܡܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܗܢܐ. ܘܣܡ ܠܗ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܘܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܕܡܢܗ ܘܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܡܫܠܛܢܘܬ ܨܒܝܢܗ. ܘܙܗܪܗ ܕܢܛܪܝܗ ܟܕ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ. ܕܐܢ ܬܛܪ ܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܬܐܚܐ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܬܛܪ ܬܡܘܬ. ܚܙܝܢ ܕܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܘܐܬܓܥܠ ܠܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܡܟܝܠ ܗܝ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܚܕܐ ܙܒܢ. ܗܝܕܝܢ ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܘܐܬܝܗܒ ܠܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܘܒܬܪ ܩܠܝܠܬܐ. [ܕܥܠ ܩܝܡܗ ܕܦܩܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ: ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܘܗܘܐ ܙܒܢܝܢ ܣܓܝܐܢ ܘܐܬܕܝܫ ܘܐܬܥܒܪ:] ܘܬܢܝܢܘܬ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܝܗܒ. ܠܐܕܡ ܘܠܘܬ ܒܢܘܗܝ. ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ [ܗܫܐ] ܗܢܐ. ܢܡܘܣܐ ܗܘ ܟܝܢܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܟܬܝܒܐ ܘܬܠܝܬܝܐ ܕܥܡ ܢܘܚ. ܠܘܬ ܢܘܚ ܘܠܘܬ ܒܢܘܗܝ. ܘܪܒܝܥܝܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܝܗܒ. ܠܘܬ ܐܒܪܗܡ ܘܐܝܣܚܩ ܘܚܡܝܫܝܬܐ ܕܥܡܐ. ܠܘܬ ܥܡܐ ܕܒܢܝ ܐܝܣܪܝܠ ܒܝܕ ܡܘܫܐ ܘܒܟܬܒܐ. ܘܒܬܪ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ. ܟܕ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܗܟܢܐ ܐܬܝܗܒ ܒܙܒܢܝܢ ܦܪܝܫܝܢ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܟܕ ܡܫܬܚܠܦ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܡܐܬܝܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܗܝܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܚܙܐ ܠܒܝܫܘܬܗ ܘܩܫܝܘܬܗ ܕܟܘܪܗܢܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܡܬܐܢܫܢܘܬ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܗܘܐ. ܗܘ ܣܝܡܢܐ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ ܘܥܒܘܕܐ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܐܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܓܢܣܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܘܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܘܐܬܗܦܟ ܥܡܗܘܢ ܘܐܠܦ ܘܪܕܐ ܐܢܘܢ. ܘܗܘ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܗ ܚܕܬܗ ܠܩܝܡܐ ܥܡ [ܒܢܝ] ܐܢܫܐ، ܡܫܬܐ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܗܘ، ܕܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܕܝܘܬܐ. ܟܬܒܗ ܐܘ ܥܠ ܠܘܚܐ ܕܟܐܦܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܟܬܒ ܒܝܕ ܡܘܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܕܡܗ ܦܪܘܩܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܫܕ ܚܠܦܝܢ ܟܬܒܗ ܠܩܝܡܗ. 'Now the covenant of God with humans, is from the time when God created the first man in His image and placed him in Paradise, whatever this is, and set down for him a law and a commandment which was from Him and gave him freedom of the will and admonished him to keep it when He said to him: "If you keep the commandment, you will live, and if you do not keep [it], you will die." We see that the covenant of God therefore was set down and entrusted to humans once, then it was set down and given to humans [many times afterwards]. *And after many things:* [*concerning the covenant of God with is which men: how it was set down and came into being many times and was trampled and transgressed*] [Jacob writes]: And a second time [it was given to] Adam and to his children, which is now this law which is natural and unwritten. And a third time with Noah and with his children. And a fourth time, with Abraham and Isaac. And a fifth time, with the people of the children of Israel by means of Moses and in written form. *And after other things* [Jacob writes]: As I have stated, in this way the covenant of God has been handed down at various times, though changing, until the coming of Christ. At that point, when He saw the wickedness and severity of the sickness of humanity, He Himself, the author of Laws and the maker of covenants came to the race of humans and became human and went about with them and taught and instructed them. And He in His person renewed the covenant with humans a sixth time, though it was not with ink that he wrote it or on stone tablets as he wrote by means of Moses. Rather, it was by means of his saving blood which he shed on our behalf that he wrote his covenant.'

[524] I am grateful to Peter Brown for this title.

being disregarded and sees that nobody is observing His law, He visits his people and renews it. Jacob believed that such was the situation in his own day:

> Now the seventh and last and most perfect of all the covenants is after the end of this world, in that blessed world without end. He is going to establish a covenant with us when He gives to each person according to his deeds: to the righteous, that which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which has not entered into the heart of a human, [cf. 1 Cor. 2:9] but to the wicked and iniquitous and the transgressors of the law, eternal torment. And this is obvious. Just as in these other periods, as soon as He was seeing that His covenant was completely disregarded and there was not even one person who was observing His law, He immediately was visiting and renewing His covenant, and gradually drawing closer to that which is more perfect. It is in this [same] way that He is now acting after this sixth period, which is with us Christians, for as soon as He sees that we are completely watering down His covenant and abandoning His law—just as, I think, it has now been abandoned by us and we have acted wickedly more than any generation, and look, the seventh period is already at the point of coming insofar as all his laws and commandments are trampled upon and negated (it is for this reason that this labor of zeal concerns me)—He Himself will pass into this world and will hasten to the completion of that seventh covenant. Although the same Person establishes it with humanity as established the sixth, this is nevertheless clear: He does not always establish a covenant with us peacefully, but He will rather establish with us this seventh covenant in a frightening and forceful and intolerable manner.[525]

Jacob was quite serious in his belief that the laxity he saw around himself meant that the advent of the seventh and final age of the world was at hand and that a dramatic and violent end was quite possibly approaching. H. Drijvers has argued persuasively

[525] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 165b: ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܒܥܐ ܘܐܚܪܝܬܐ: ܘܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܦܢܝ̈ܬܐ. ܒܬܪ ܫܘܠܡܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ. ܒܥܠܡܐ ܗܘ ܡܒܪܟܐ ܕܠܐ ܫܘܠܡ. ܥܬܝܕ ܕܢܩܝܡ ܥܡܢ ܕܝܬܩܐ. ܐܡܬܝ ܕܦܪܥ ܠܟܠܢܫ ܐܝܟ ܥܒܕ̈ܘܗܝ. ܠܙܕܝܩ̈ܐ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܚܙܬ ܘܐܕܢܐ ܠܐ ܫܡܥܬ. ܘܥܠ ܠܒܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܠܐ ܣܠܩ ܠܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ ܕܝܢ ܘܠܥܘ̈ܠܐ ܘܠܥܒܪ̈ܝ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܬܫܢܝܩܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ. ܗܕܐ ܕܝܢ ܝܕܝܥܐ ܐܦ ܗܪܟܐ. ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܙܒܢ̈ܬܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ: ܡܚܕܐ ܕܚܙܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܕܝܬܩܗ ܓܡܪ ܡܬܒܣܪ ܗܘܐ ܡܢܗ: ܘܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܚܕ ܕܢܛܪ ܢܡܘܣܗ. ܡܚܕܐ ܦܩܕ ܗܘܐ ܘܡܚܕܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܕܝܬܩܗ: ܟܕ ܒܫܒܠ ܫܒܠ ܡܩܪܒ ܗܘܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܡܫܡܠܝܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܗܫܐ ܒܬܪ ܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܫܬܬܐ ܕܠܘܬܢ ܒܢܝ ܟܪܝܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܚܙܐ ܕܓܡܪ ܥܠܝܢ ܡܬܒܣܪܝܢ ܠܕܝܬܩܗ ܘܫܒܩܝܢ ܠܢܡܘܣܗ: ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܗܫܐ ܕܣܒܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܫܒܝܩ ܠܗ ܡܢܢ: ܘܐܥܘܠܢ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܕܪܐ ܐܪܫܥܢ: ܘܗܐ ܡܢ ܟܪܘ ܐܦ ܡܛܝܐ ܕܢܐܬܐ ܫܒܝܥܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܥܕܢܐ: ܒܗܝ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܢܡܘ̈ܣܘܗܝ ܘܦܘܩ̈ܕܢܘܗܝ: ܗܐ ܕܫܝܫܝܢ ܘܡܬܒܛܠܝܢ: ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܥܡܠܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܛܢܢܐ ܪܕܐ ܠܝ. ܗܘܝܘ ܡܥܒܪ ܠܗ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܐܦ ܗܘ. ܘܡܣܪܗܒ ܠܫܘܡܠܝܗ ܕܗܢܐ ܗܘ ܫܒܝܥܝܐ. ܗܘ ܥܡ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܗܘ ܡܩܝܡ ܠܗ ܥܡ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ: ܗܘ ܕܐܩܝܡܗ ܐܦ ܠܫܬܝܬܝܐ ܗܢ ܕܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܒܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܒܫܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܟܠ ܐܡܬܝ ܡܩܝܡ ܥܡܢ ܕܝܬܩܐ ܒܫܝܢܐܝܬ. ܐܠܐ ܕܚܝܠܐܝܬ ܘܩܛܝܪܐܝܬ. Peter Brown has pointed out to me that such an ‘impulse’ view of history is similar to the Qur’ānic idea of specific prophets being sent for each time period, after which a falling away from their message occurs. See e.g. Q 2:213, 3:81-91, 6:84-93, 10:47, 33:7,

that a short apocalypse prefaced to the Clementine Octateuch was, along with the Octateuch itself, a text containing a large number of ecclesiastical canons, the work of Jacob of Edessa.[526] A colophon to one manuscript of the work states that it was translated from Greek into Syriac by 'Jacob the poor' in the year 998 of the Greeks—i.e., 687 AD, perhaps one year before Jacob quit his see in disgust and anger at the non-observance of church canons.[527]

Known as the *Testament of Our Lord*, this short apocalypse has Jesus appear to the Disciples after the Resurrection. They ask Christ to tell them of the signs of the end times, so that they will be able to tell the believers at that time in order for them to be aware and be saved.[528] In response, Jesus describes famines, wars, political events and portents in the heavens which will all indicate that the end is nigh; Jesus' description of the state of the churches offers us a clue to how Jacob himself viewed the church of his day:

> There will be many disturbances in the assemblies and among the nations and in the churches, for wicked shepherds will rise up, unjust, despisers, greedy, lovers of pleasure, lovers of profit, lovers of money, full of words, boasters, arrogant, perverts, empty, effeminate, vainglorious, who come like adversaries against the ways of the Gospel and who flee from the narrow gate [cf. Mt. 7:13] and who cast away from themselves everyone who is wounded and have no pity

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[526] See H. J.W. Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord: Jacob of Edessa's Response to Islam,' *Aram* 6 (1994), pp. 104-114, esp. p. 107.

[527] See I.E. Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* (Mainz, 1899; repr. Hildesheim, 1968), p. 148: ܫܠܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܒ̈ ܕܩܠܝܡܝܣ. ܡܦܫܩ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܝܐ. ܠܝܥܩܘܒ ܡܣܟܢܐ ܒܫܢܬ ܨ̈ ܘܨ̈ ܚ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ܀ 'The second book of Clement is ended. It was translated from the Greek language to Syriac by the poor Jacob in the year 998 of the Greeks.' cf. Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord,' p. 104.

[528] There is no critical edition of the *Testamentum Domini* and at least five different versions of the apocalyptic portion of it have been published: P. de Lagarde, *Reliquiae Iuris Ecclesiastici Antiquissimae* (Vienna, 1856; repr. Osnabrück/Wiesbaden, 1967), pp. ܒ – ܝܛ; Rahmani, *Testamentum Domini Nostri Jesu Christi*, pp. 2-18; F. Nau, 'Fragment inédit d'une traduction syriaque jusqu'ici inconnue du *Testamentum D.N. Jesu Christi*,' *Journal asiatique* 9e sér., 17 (1901), pp. 233-256; J.P. Arendzen, 'A New Syriac Text of the Apocalyptic Part of the "Testament of the Lord,"' *Journal of Theological Studies* 2 (1901), pp. 401-416; A. Vööbus, ed. and trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367-368; SS 161-162) (Louvain, 1975), pp. 1-7 (Syriac) and pp. 27-31 (ET). See Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord,' pp. 104-105, 110, for discussion of these various publications.

on My wound. They reject every word of truth and treat every path of piety with contempt. They do not mourn over their sins. Therefore, unbelief, the hatred of brothers, wickedness, presumption, bitterness, contempt, jealousy, enmity, contentions, acts of theft, acts of oppression, drunkenness, debauchery, wantonness, excess, fornication, and all acts which oppose the commandments of life will be spread throughout the nations, for mournfulness and humility and peace and acts of mercy and gentleness and poverty and pity and weeping will flee from many because the shepherds heard of these things but did not practice them, nor did they show forth My commandments, being [instead] examples of wickedness among the people. And there will come a time when people from among them will deny Me and will cause confusion in the land and will trust in worldly kings; but those who persevere to the end in my name will be saved [cf. Mt. 24:13]. At that time, they will set down commandments for humans that are not according to the Scripture and commandment,[529] those things with which the Father is pleased, and my elect and holy ones will be rejected by them and will be called unclean among them. But these are orthodox, pure, earnest, gentle, merciful, earnest, pleasant...[530]

In the *Testament of Our Lord*, Christ himself speaks of pastors not obeying His commandments; this emphasis on obeying the commandments of Christ should be read in light of Jacob's treatise against those who transgressed ecclesiastical canons. For Jacob, the commandments and teaching of Christ went to the very heart of his understanding of Christianity. It was the teaching of Christ which distinguished

[529] For the disagreement of various manuscripts on the wording of this phrase, see Arendzen, 'A New Syriac Text,' p. 409, n. 1.

[530] My translation. Syriac text in Vööbus, *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367; SS 161), pp. 3-4: ܒܪ̈ܢܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܘܡܕܒܪ̈ܢܐ ܘܡܬܕܒܪ̈ܢܐ ܘܒܥ̈ܠܕܒܒܐ ܡܫܬܟ̈ܚܢܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ. ܢܣܒܡܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܕܒܡܚܘܬܐ ܒܡܠܟܐ. ܠܐ ܟ̈ܐܢܐ. ܡܫܬܡܥܢܐ. ܒ̈ܬܠܐ. ܕܝܪܘ ܡܬܟܢܫܘܬܐ. ܕܝܪܘ ܒܡܬܪܐ. ܕܝܪܘ ܢܣܒܐ. ܡܚܝ̈ܠܐ، ܡܠ̈ܐ. ܫܒܝܪ̈ܐ. ܡܬܬܚܠܦܢܐ. ܡܫܩܠܢܐ. ܩܛܠܢܐ. ܒܫܘܠܡܐ. ܚܙܝܪ ܥܡܒܪܢܐ. ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܫܘܡܠܝܐܘܬ ܠܡܘܡܠ ܐܘܪܚܬܐ ܕܐܘܦܠܝܘܢ. ܘܟܕܡܝܢ ܡܢ ܬܪܥܐ ܐܠܝܡܐ. ܘܕܝܫܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܒܠ ܬܪܥܐ. ܘܠܐ ܚܐܝܢ ܒܠ ܬܪܥܐ ܕܝܠܝ. ܘܡܫܠܡ ܠܟܠ ܥܠܡܐ ܕܙܪ̈ܝܐ ܘܡܣܬܟܠܝܢ ܠܟܠ ܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܡܫܡܠܝܘܬ ܕܫܠܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܐܒܠܝܢ ܥܠ ܚܛܗ̈ܝܗܘܢ: ܘܡܛܠܗܢܐ ܡܚܝܠ ܒܥܡ̈ܡܐ. ܠܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܣܢܝܐܘܬܐ ܕܐܚ̈ܐ. ܒܝܫܘܬܐ. ܡܪܚܘܬܐ. ܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ. ܫܘܝܛܘܬܐ. ܚܣܡܐ. ܒܥܠܕܒܒܘܬܐ. ܚܪ̈ܝܢܐ. ܓܢ̈ܒܘܬܐ. ܥܘ̈ܠܘܬܐ. ܪܘܝܘܬܐ. ܐܣܘܛܘܬܐ. ܦܪܘܚܘܬܐ. ܙܢܝܘܬܐ. ܘܟܠܗܝܢ ܣܘܥܪ̈ܢܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܦܘܩ̈ܕܢܐ ܕܚ̈ܝܐ. ܢܣܓܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ. ܐܒܝܠܘܬܐ. ܘܡܟܝܟܘܬܐ. ܘܫܝܢܐ. ܘܪ̈ܚܡܐ. ܘܢܝܚܘܬܐ. ܘܡܣܟܢܘܬܐ. ܘܚܢܢܐ. ܘܒܟܝܐ. ܥܪܩ ܕܪ̈ܥܘܬܐ ܫܡܥܘ ܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܘܠܐ ܥܒܕܘ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܚܘܝܘ ܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܕܝܠܝ. ܟܕ ܗܘܘ ܛܘܦܣܐ ܠܒܝܫܘܬܐ ܕܒܥܡܐ. ܢܐܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܙܒܢܐ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܢܟܦܪܘܢ ܒܝ. ܘܕܘܠܚܫܐ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܢܒܕܪܘܢ. ܘܢܬܟܠܘܢ ܥܠ ܡܠ̈ܟܐ ܥܠܡ̈ܢܝܐ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܣܝܒܪܝܢ ܒܫܡܝ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܚܪܬܐ ܢܚܘܢ. ܗܝܕܝܢ ܢܣܝܡܘܢ ܦܘܩ̈ܕܢܐ ܠܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܟܬܒܐ ܘܦܘܩܕܢܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܒܐ ܨܒܐ ܒܗܝܢ. ܘܢܫܬܝܛܘܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܓܒ̈ܝܝ ܕܝܠܝ ܘܩܕ̈ܝܫܝ. ܘܐܝܟ ܛܡ̈ܐܐ ܢܬܩܪܘܢ ܒܝܢܬܗܘܢ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܪܝܨܝ ܫܘܒܚܐ. ܕܟ̈ܝܐ. ܚܦܝ̈ܛܐ. ܢܝ̈ܚܐ. ܡܪ̈ܚܡܢܐ. ܒܣܝ̈ܡܐ... cf. the ET by Vööbus in *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368; SS 162), pp. 28-29, though it should be used with caution and checked against the Syriac text. For this passage and Jacob, cf. Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord,' pp. 111-112.

Christianity from all other doctrines and religions. Furthermore, insofar as Christianity was the covenant of God with human beings, Jacob asserted that we should call people who lived before the time of Christ yet who were looking forward to His coming 'Christians.' God gives humans a covenant and a law and commandments to live by; though it has come in different forms and in different times through different human agents and then finally through God's own Son, it is nevertheless still fundamentally the same agreement between God and humans.[531] 'Indeed, therefore,' Jacob wrote

> with Adam in Paradise, with [Adam] and with his children after the departure from Paradise, with Noah and again, with Abraham, with Moses and the Children of Israel, and again, with us Christians—the word of God which came to human beings and the law and commandment that was given to them by Him to observe and live by—it is this that is the covenant of God which is with us humans—even if they [sc. the covenants] have different titles, being given through different persons.[532]

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[531] BL Add., 12,154, fols. 166a- 166b: ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܣܓܘܕܘܗܝ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܗܝܡܢܢ ܒܚܫܘܗܝ ܘܐܬܦܪܩܢ ܒܡܘܬܗ ܘܐܬܩܪܝܢ ܒܫܡܗ. ܚܠܦ ܡܫܝܚܝܐ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܝܘܢܐܝܬ ܡܫܬܡܗܝܢܢ ܘܗܘܝܘ ܠܗ ܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬܢ: ܕܡܛܠܬܗ ܐܦ ܡܬܩܪܝܢܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ: ܘܐܦ ܗܘ ܟܕ ܩܝܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܡܫܬܡܗܢܘܬܗ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ. ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܦܪܘܩܢ. ܕܒܗ ܦܪܝܫܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܘܕܚܠܬܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܕܒܥܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ܀ ܒܗܢܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܡܪܢ ܕܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܘܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܚܠܬܐ. ܡܢ ܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܘܡܢ ܒܪܒܪܝܘܬܐ. ܘܐܦ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕܝܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܛܥܝܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܛ̈ܥܝܐ ܩܛܘܠܝ ܐܠܗܐ. ܝܗܘܕܝܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܩܕܡ ܡܐܬܝܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ. ܐܦ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܩܪܐ: ܐܢܗܘ ܕܗܘܬ ܣܟܝܐ ܕܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܣܟܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܡܗܝܡܢܐܝܬ. ܘܡܛܠ ܕܡܐܬܝܬܗ ܡܬܢܒܝܐ ܗܘܬ. ܐܦ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܫܪܟܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܩܝ̈ܡܐ ܥܬܝ̈ܩܐ ܕܐܬܥܒܕܘ: ܕܗܘܘ ܠܘܬ ܟܐܢ̈ܐ ܩܕܡ̈ܝܐ. ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܩܪܘܢ. ܐܢܗܘ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܠܡܐܬܝܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܣܟܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܡܪܢ ܕܥܬܝܩܐ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܚܠܬܐ. ܟܕ ܠܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܣܟܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܩܪܝܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ.: 'For this reason, we, the worshippers of Christ, who have believed in His sufferings and who have been delivered by His death and have been called by His name, are named "Christians" in the Greek way rather than Messiah-ites and He is the covenant of God which is with us, on account of Whom we are also called "Christians." Moreover, the covenant, as I have said, is named 'Christianity,' the teaching of Christ our Savior, by which we are distinguished from all the doctrines and religions of humans in this world. It is in this way that we have stated that Christianity is ancient and first, more so than all religions—I mean paganism, and barbarianism, and also Judaism, this error which the errant killers of God now hold to. But the original Judaism which is before the coming of Christ should be called 'Christianity,' if it was faithfully expecting Christ and because His coming was prophesied. As for all the other ancient covenants, which were made with the righteous of old, they should also be called "Christianity," if they were all awaiting the coming of Christ. For this reason, we have said that Christianity is older than all religions, since we call the covenant of God which is with those who were expecting Christ "Christianity."'

[532] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 166b: ܐܦ ܗܟܝܠ ܥܡ ܐܕܡ ܒܦܪܕܝܣܐ: ܘܥܡܗ ܘܥܡ ܒܢܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܪܕܝܣܐ: ܘܥܡ ܢܘܚ ܘܬܘܒ ܥܡ ܐܒܪܗܡ: ܘܥܡ ܡܘܫܐ ܘܥܡ ܒܢܝ ܐܝܣܪܝܠ: ܘܬܘܒ ܐܦ ܥܡܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ. ܡܠܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܗܘܬ ܥܡ ܒܢܝܢܫܐ: ܘܢܡܘܣܐ ܘܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܝܗܒ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢܗ

Jacob went so far as to explicitly define what exactly Christianity was:

> Definition of Christianity: We say therefore that Christianity is the covenant of God which is with humans, which is perfected by means of Orthodox faith in God and by means of a knowledge and confession of the Economy which God the Word suffered on our behalf when He became human, and by means of being born again through water and the Spirit [cf. John 3:5] and partaking in the sufferings and death of the only begotten Word, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by means of receiving His holy Body and Blood, and by means of a pure and holy way of life, which imitates Christ as much as it is possible for a human to imitate Christ. It [sc. the covenant] is fulfilled through the observation of the laws and commandments of God and through the hope and expectation of the resurrection of human bodies from among the dead and of the judgment and recompense of the world which is to come.[533]

Understanding Christianity in this way was pivotal for Jacob; this definition was the way by which 'we are distinguished and different from all the pagan nations and the Jews, those who are in error and wicked and without law.'[534]

In the covenant between God and humans that was Christianity, the human end of the bargain involved observing God's laws and commandments. Jacob's attempt at confronting the Patriarch Julian about widespread abuse of ecclesiastical rules must have sprung from a deep conviction that the very essence of Christianity was being violated and vitiated by a certain antinomism prevalent in the church. Apparently, some people in his day held to the view that merely having correct belief was sufficient

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ܠܡܛܪ ܘܠܡܚܣܢܘ ܒܗ. ܗܘ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ. ܐܦ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܒ̈ܢܝܐ ܡܫܝܚܝ̈ܐ. ܒܗ ܒܝܕ ܦܪ̈ܝܢ ܘܦܫܐ ܡܫܝܚܝ̈ܐ ܡܬܝܕܥܝܢ

[533] BL Add. 12,154, fols. 166b-167a: ܬܘܚܡܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ. ܩܝܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ. ܕܡܬܓܡܪ ܒܝܕ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬ ܫܘܒܚܐ ܕܒܐܠܗܐ: ܘܒܝܕ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܘܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܣܝܒܪ ܚܠܦܝܢ ܡܠܬܐ ܐܠܗܐ ܟܕ ܗܘܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܘܒܝܕ ܡܘܠܕܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܪܝܫ ܕܡܢ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܘܪܘܚܐ: ܘܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܚ̈ܫܐ ܘܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܗܘ ܡܠܬܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܡܪܢ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ: ܘܒܝܕ ܢܣܒܬܐ ܕܦܓܪܗ ܘܕܡܗ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܘܒܝܕ ܕܘܒܪܐ ܕܟܝܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܬܕܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܡܐ ܕܡܨܐ ܐܝܟ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܠܡܬܕܡܝܘ. ܗܘ ܕܡܫܬܡܠܐ ܒܝܕ ܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܢܡ̈ܘܣܐ ܘܦܘ̈ܩܕܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܒܝܕ ܣܒܪܐ ܘܣܘܟܝܐ ܕܩܝܡܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܡܝ̈ܬܐ ܕܦܓ̈ܪܐ ܐܢܫ̈ܝܐ. ܘܕܕܝܢܐ ܘܦܘܪܥܢܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܥܬܝܕ ❖ Wright published this text, on the basis of BL Add. 17,193, in *idem.*, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London 1871), pp. 996-997.

[534] BL Add., 12,154, fol. 167a: ܗܕܐ ܗܝ ܠܝ ܡܠܬܐ ܡܫܝܚܝܘܬܐ ܘܬܘܚܡܗ ܡܦܪܫܢܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ. ܕܒܗ ܦܪܝܫܝܢ ܘܡܫܚܠܦܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܚܢܦ̈ܐ ܘܝܗܘ̈ܕܝܐ: ܛܥ̈ܝܐ ܘܒ̈ܝܫܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܢܡܘܣ.

to make one a Christian; this was a view which Jacob strongly rejected. Being a Christian demanded both proper belief and proper action. Neither one of these was optional: 'This is a complete description of Christianity and this is the canon and definition which explains it,' Jacob wrote,

> Along with an Orthodox faith which is in God, it demands the doing of good works, being distant from evil activity and wronging [others], and the keeping of the laws and commandments of God. It is not in accordance with the empty belief of the transgressors of the law, who erroneously assert that Orthodox faith alone suffices us for salvation, apart from keeping the laws and apart from praiseworthy action and pure and chaste behavior...perfect Christianity is not faith alone, nor is it only action, but rather the two of them together.[535]

Because true Christianity required keeping the laws and commandments of God, Jacob took these rules with utmost seriousness and left behind a sizeable body of material relating to their proper observation. Jacob also went so far as to translate canon law from Greek into Syriac and H. Drijvers has argued that Jacob identified his own story with the plight of Cyprian in the third century.[536]

Jacob's Canons as a Window into seventh-century Syrian Society

It is our good fortune that Jacob took ecclesiastical law so seriously, for his canons shed much light on certain aspects of society in Umayyad-ruled Syria. I will especially rely on Jacob's replies to dozens of questions asked him by the priest Addai.[537]

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[535] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 167a-167b: ܗܕܐ ܗܝ، ܟܠܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ. ܘܗܢܘ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܘܬܚܘܡܐ ܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܕܝܠܗ̇. ܕܥܡ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ ܕܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ: ܐܦ ܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܕܥܒ̈ܕܐ ܛܒ̈ܐ: ܡܢ ܪܘܚܩܘܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܒܝܫܐ ܘܡܥܠܠܘܬܐ ܕܥܘܠܐ: ܘܢܛܘܪܘܬܐ ܕܢܡܘ̈ܣܐ ܘܦܘܩܕ̈ܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܣܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܣܦܝܩܬܐ ܕܥܒ̈ܪܝ، ܢܡܘܣܐ. ܗܢܘ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܠܛܥܝܘܬܗܘܢ. ...ܡܕܝܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕܝܗ̇ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܒܠܚܘܕܘܗܝ ܐܠܐ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܗܘܢ ܐܟܚܕܐ܀ Peter Brown has pointed out to me the parallel between ideas here rejected by Jacob and views rejected by Augustine (*City of God*, 21.22) in which certain people held that a person who persisted in wicked behavior and would not change his ways but who, at the same time, gave alms, would be saved from eternal punishment.

[536] Drijvers, 'Testament of Our Lord,' pp. 108-110.

[537] 71 of these were published by P. de Lagarde, *Reliquiae Iuris Ecclesiastici Antiquissimae* (Osnabrück, 1967) pp. ܩܝ - ܩܡܕ and T.J. Lamy, *Dissertatio de Syrorum fide et disciplina in re eucharistica* (Louvain, 1859), pp. 98-171. Harvard Syriac 93 and Mardin 310 contain two additional rulings by Jacob in

If we assume that these canons were motivated by real-life situations which he was aware of, either through personal experience, or through reports, we have here a remarkable source for seeing just what was actually happening 'on the ground' in terms of how Miaphysite Christians in Syria were interacting with and living along side both other non-Miaphysite Christians and also with non-Christians. Viewed from the perspective of Jacob's canons and other sources, the situation outside the world of rarefied theological dispute was messy and chaotic. The implications of differing on the finer points of Christology do not seem to have sunk in with certain segments of the Christian population. The image that emerges from Jacob's canons as well as other seventh and early eighth-century sources (some from outside of Syria) is of a society where a separation between competing and rival churches has taken place at an ideological level but where the actual sociological implications of the intellectual and doctrinal partition of the Christian community have not been fully worked out. The lag-time between these two separations is reflected in the frequent displeasure and anger expressed by Jacob in his canons, as well as in other sources emanating from ecclesiastical elites.

To begin, it seems as if Miaphysite and Chalcedonian clergy were often on friendly terms. If, Addai asked, out of necessity it happens that a believing clergyman sits at the table with a heretical clergyman, what should happen: should the Orthodox person say the blessing and the Heretic eat, or vice versa?[538] Lest it be thought that

this collection, in addition to a number of other canons of Jacob and further answers to more questions by Addai. For this information, see R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Princeton, 1997), pp. 592-608.

[538] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 152, which contains misprints. See Mardin 310, fol. 203b for a better Syriac version: ܐܕܝ، ܐܢ ܡܢ ܐܢܢܩܐ ܢܓܕܫ ܕܢܬܒ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܘܣ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܥܡ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܘܣ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܥܠ ܦܬܘܪܐ. ܐܝܢܐ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܢܒܪܟ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܐ ܘܢܐܟܘܠ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ. ܐܘ ܗܘ ܕܠܗܦܟܐ ܕܗܢܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܐܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܫܚܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܠܗܢ ܦܘܫܩܐ: ܕܠܐ ܠܐ ܢܐܟܠܘܢ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܘ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܐ ܥܡ ܐܪܛܝܩܘ: ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ

such meal-time encounters might have only occurred in unavoidable situations, it seems that Miaphysite and Chalcedonian monks were even living together. In another question, Addai wants to know whether it is appropriate for an Orthodox monk and ascetic to have as a friend a heretical monk and ascetic who is not a family member? Can they live next to one another and share in everything except for the liturgy?[539] Jacob's response, that loving the Lord and keeping his commandments and being friends with a heretic were mutually exclusive propositions cannot have been self-evident to all in his day. Indeed, Addai had spoken about sharing everything save the Eucharist, but it seems that members of rival churches were even sharing this.

There is evidence of Miaphysite monks not being disturbed at knowingly having members of rival communities living among them. In the early eighth-century *Life* of Theodota, the protagonist finds a man in the monastery of Mar Sergios the Broad learning the Psalms who is a secret Nestorian. 'This man is a Nestorian,' Theodota tells the Abbot, 'and you trample upon the law of God when you give him the Eucharist and seat him at the table of life.' But the Abbot and monks disregard his warning. The Nestorian was a carpenter and they did not want to send him away. The Nestorian is

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ܠܗ ܐܬܪܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܫܘܐܠܐ 'Addai: If, out of necessity, it happens that a believing clergyman sits with a heretical clergyman at the table, which of the [two should happen]: let the Orthodox say the blessing and the Heretic eat, or that which is the opposite of this? Jacob: if it were not completely defined and decreed that Orthodox clergy and priests are not to eat with heretics, there would have been a place for this question.'

[539] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 152, 154: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܦܐܐ ܠܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܘܡܚܣܢܐ ܘܡܥܪܩܐ: ܢܣܒ ܠܗ ܪܚܡܐ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܘܡܚܣܢܐ ܘܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܠܥܠܡܗ، ܥܪܩ: ܘܠܝܬܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܫܪܒܐ ܘܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܚܕܕܐ ܘܢܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܒܟܠܡܕܡ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ: ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܡܪܚܡ ܠܡܪܢ ܘܠܡܛܪ ܦܘܩܕܢܘܗܝ، ܘܕܫܠܝܚܘܗܝ: ܘܠܡܪܚܡ ܠܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܘܠܡܬܚܠܛܘ ܠܗ: ܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ ܐܟܚܕܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܢ. ܡܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ܀ 'Addai: Whether it is appropriate for an Orthodox individual who is a monk and an ascetic and who has renounced the world to take for himself a friend who is a heretic, a monk and ascetic, who has also renounced the world, who is not from his family and for them to dwell near one another and for them to have intercourse and participation in everything apart from the liturgy. Jacob: Loving our Lord and keeping His commandments and those of His Apostles and loving a heretic and having interaction with him—the two things at the same time are not possible. It is, therefore, not right.'

eventually sent out from the monastery, but it takes a demon dramatically possessing the heretic and boasting at his joy at spiritually damaging the monks of the monastery through intercommunion to force the issue.[540]

The sharply polemical literature that exists between Miaphysites and Chalcedonians might suggest that the divisions between these two groups were quite clear; conversely, however, it might suggest precisely the opposite—the divisions between the groups were not clear at all, hence the high volume and strident tone of the authors of such works. Indeed, it is not obvious that strong disagreements about Christology were of equal importance to everyone, nor that they of necessity had easily translatable sociological implications. We might suppose that these disagreements were significant only to those who had attained a high level of literacy and education. But even the importance of these disagreements and the seriousness with which the literate and the scribes took them is called into question by Jacob's canons. Is it right, Addai asks Jacob, for an Orthodox monk to write out questions and answers which help the heretics against the Orthodox faith in exchange for money or some other form of compensation? Such a person, Jacob responded, was a second Judas.[541]

If there was an apparent lack of concern among some Miaphysites about helping to propagate the theology of the Chalcedonians, it should come as no surprise that there was also confusion as to whether a Miaphysite should abide by the canons of

[540] For the incident, see St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fols. 553a-553b (sections 98-103 in my edition).
[541] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 154: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܐ ܕܢܟܬܘܒ ܠܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܗܘ ܨܒܘ̈ܬܐ ܡܕܡ: ܫܘ̈ܐܠܐ ܘܦܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܡܥܕܪܝܢ ܠܝܘܠܦܢܗ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܨܬܐ: ܘܢܣܒ ܡܢܗ ܐܓܪܐ ܐܘ ܨܒܘܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܣܢܝܩ ܠܗ: ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܢܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܐܦ ܠܐ ܒܬܠܬܝܢ ܕܟܣܦܐ ܙܒܢܗ: ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ܀ 'Addai: Whether it is right for an Orthodox monk to write for a heretic certain things, questions and answers which help his doctrine against the Orthodox faith, and to take from him a wage or something which he needs. Jacob: Such a one is a traitor to the faith of Christ, even if it is not for thirty pieces of silver that he has sold it, like the original betrayer.'

heretics. Is it appropriate, Addai asked, that we keep a heretical canon? No, Jacob, responded, not even if it is justly and rightly stated.[542]

Apparently, it was the switching of allegiances by individuals that was causing at least part of the confusion about jurisdiction and the applicability of canons and ecclesiastical decrees across competing communions. How should we treat, asks John the Stylite of Litarb, a heretic who has been excommunicated by his superior for his sin and who now wants to be received with us?[543] An Orthodox man, John also reports to Jacob, has been excommunicated by a heretical bishop. What should he do?[544]

Confessional loyalties could vary, even within a family, from one generation to another. Addai wanted to know if it was lawful for Orthodox children to make

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[542] A. Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) (Louvain, 1975) p. 259: ܐܕܝ. ܦܐܐ ܕܢܛܪ ܥܠ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܐܪܛܝܩܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܠܐ ܦܐܐ ܘܐܦܠܐ ܐܢ ܒܟܐܢܐܝܬ ܘܬܪܝܨܐܝܬ ܐܡܪ ܦܣܩ. ET in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162) (Louvain, 1975), p. 236: 'Addaï. Is it proper to keep a canon of the heretics? Ja'qōb. It is not proper, even if it decrees rightly and correctly.' Though note that in his thirteenth-century work on canon law, Bar Hebraeus would cite the Council of Chalcedon as an authority. See, for example, Bedjan, ed., *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei*, (Paris, 1898), pp. 77, 109; see his listing of Chalcedon as a source, p. 2.

[543] Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161), p. 244: ܝܘܚܢܢ. ܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܕܐܬܦܩܕ ܡܢ ܪܫܐ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ ܥܠ ܚܛܝܬܗ. ܘܨܒܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܥܡܢ ܢܩܒܠܝܘܗܝ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܢܫܬܪܐ ܡܢ ܥܕܠܝܐ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܪܚܡ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܢ. ܘܗܢܘܢ ܠܐ ܫܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܕܢܬܩܒܠ ܠܘܬܢ ܕܚܢܢ ܣܡܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܬܪܥܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܣܟܠܘܬܗ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܩܒܠ ܠܐ ܢܬܩܒܠ. 'John: In the case of a heretic who has been excommunicated by the superior who is over him for his sin, and who wants to be with us, should we accept him? Jacob: Let him be free from blame. And if he loves our faith but they will not absolve him that he might be received [by us] because we ourselves have placed a correction upon him, in accordance with his fault, [let him be received.] But if he will not accept [it], let him not be received.' cf. the ET in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 224.

[544] Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) p. 245: ܝܘܚܢܢ. ܐܡܪ ܐܢܫ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܘܣ ܕܐܬܚܪܡ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܡܢܐ ܢܥܒܕ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܠܐ ܢܛܪ ܚܪܡܗܘܢ. ܠܚܪܡܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܦܣܩܐ ܕܩܢܘܢܗܘܢ ܫܪܝܪ. ܘܗܟܢܐ ܐܢ ܐܢܫ ܫܒܩ ܗܪܣܝܣ ܘܐܬܐ ܠܥܕܬܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܬܚܪܡ ܡܢ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ. ܠܐ ܢܛܪ ܩܢܘܢܗܘܢ. ܐܢ ܓܝܪ ܫܒܩ ܘܒܣܝ ܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܢܫܒܘܩ ܘܢܒܣܐ ܕܠܐ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܘܩܢܛܐ. ܐܦ ܠܩܢܘܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܣܡܘ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܡܪܚܐܝܬ. 'John: An Orthodox person says that he has been excommunicated by an heretical bishop. What should he do? Jacob: We should not observe the excommunication, for they do not have the true faith, neither is the excommunication of their canon true. And in the same way: if a person leaves heresies and comes to the church of believers and for this reason is excommunicated by the heretics, we should not observe their canon. For if he has left and despised their heresies, let him also leave and despise without fear and apprehension that canon which they have presumptuously set down against him.' My translation. cf. the ET in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 225.

memorials and celebrate Eucharists for their parents who were heretics and who had died in heresy. What if, he went on, the parents were heretics, but gave their son to the Orthodox to become a monk? Here we have an indication that putative sectarian boundaries apparently did not impede the donation of children to monasteries. Jacob's answer was nuanced: if the parents had been supporters and proponents of the heresy, no Eucharists or memorials should be celebrated. If, however, they had been among the 'simple people' and had held to the heresy out of a 'certain custom' and 'not out of wickedness' then the question of whether such memorial services might be celebrated in their honor was left to the judgment of the children.[545]

[545] The canon is in Mardin 310, fols. 212b-213b, and seems to be among the things which Jacob tells Addai he will inform him about although he has not asked (see Jacob's comments on fols. 207b-208a), though the structure of the canon seems also to be in the question-and-answer format. Harvard 93, fols. 25a-26a contains a longer version of the same canon, but is in the form of a question from Addai and an answer from Jacob. Because it is damaged, the text I give here is from Mardin 310, with brackets indicating material included from Harvard 93 and not found in the Mardin ms. The double brackets mark a dittography in Mardin 310. [ܐܡܪ] ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܐܘܪܬܕܘܟܣܘܣ: ܒܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܘܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܐܒܗܝܗܘܢ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ. ܘܐܢ ܦܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܒܪܗܘܢ ܐܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ، ܒܥܕܐ ܕܪܕܝܐ ܘܫܒܩܘ ܢܣܒܘܗܝ، ܕܢܗܘܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܘܪܬܕܘܟܣܘ: ܕܢܬܕܟܪ ܐܒܘܗܝ ܥܠ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܘܒܝܬ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܥܠ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ. ܒܗ ܗܠܝܢ. ܘܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܢܘܬܪܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܘܠܐܒܘܗܝ ܕܡܬܠܬܗ ܗܘܝܢ ܒܗ ܒܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܡܠܟ [ܐܡܘܪܒ:] ܒܥܐܠܐ ܗܢܐ. ܦܘܫܩܐ ܗܦܟܢܐ ܐܡܪܬ. ܡܛܠ ܕܣܛܐܬܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܡܐ ܕܐܒܗܬܐ. ܠܐ ܡܫܦܩܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܘܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܒܗ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܒܪܡ ܡܛܠ ܕܝܕܥ ܢܫܐ ܕܒܐܠܗܐ ܕܠܐܚܪܐ ܚܙܝ. ܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܘܒܦܘܫܩܐ ܢܥܒܕܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܢܣܬ ܘܠܘܬ ܬܫܟܚܬܐ ܒܠܬܘܡܬܐ: ܘܠܘܬ ܡܬܒܪܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܘ، ܒܗܝ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܐܒܗܬܐ. ܘܢܥܒܕ ܦܘܪܫܐ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܠܗܘܬ ܬܪܬܝܢܬܐ ܡܦܠܓܘܬܐ ܕܗܘܝܢ ܕܥܒܕܘ: ܐܢ ܗܘ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܡܘܩܪܐ ܕܪܗܛܘ ܐܬܬܘܝܘܢ ܗܘܘ: ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܘܡܬܬܟܬܫܢܐ ܕܫܠܝܛܝܢ: ܘܡܩܘܡܠܢܐ ܘܡܢ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܬܘܒ. ܕܟܠ ܒܠܗ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܘܥܘܗܕܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܠܗ ܗܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܒܥܠܐ ܒܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܕܐܒܗܝܗܘܢ ܐܢ ܡܢ ܝܕ ܐܝܟ ܕܫܘܟܠܠ ܐܠܗܐ. ܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܠܐ ܒܝܕ ܫܘܘܝܐ ܚܝܠܐܝܬ ܢܬܬܬܐ. ܒܪܡ ܐܦ ܗܕܐ. ܐܢ ܗܘ [[ܐܢ ܗܘ]] ܕܠܐ ܐܦ ܒܠܬܐ ܕܐܒܕܢܐ ܕܐܚܝܕ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܬܗܘܐ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܗܕܐ. ܙܕܩ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܐܬܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܬܪ ܒܢܝܐ ܒܪܘܫܝܗܘܢ: ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܫܬܘܬܐ ܐܝܟܐ ܐܚܝܕ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܗܒܬ ܒܗܢ ܡܢ ܐܒܗܬܐ: ܘܥܒܝܕ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬ ܕܐܦ ܒܕܘܟܠܬܐ ܒܗܝܢܐ ܢܬܒܪܘܢ ܫܡܗܐ ܕ ܓܒܪܐ ܪܫܝܥܐ ܘܡܩܘܡܐ ܕܗܪܣܝܣ. ܐܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܦܫܝܛܐ ܐܬܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܬܬܠܬܗܘܢ ܗܢ، ܡܠܠܐ: ܘܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܒܗܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܪܢܐ ܡܕܡ ܠܒܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܠܗܪܣܝܣ ܘܠܘ ܡܢ ܒܝܫܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܚܙܐ ܡܠܠܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܢܬܠܫ ܠܝ ܒܢܝܐ ܕܒܪܝܫܘܢ. ܘܐܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܐܬܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܐܢ ܚܠܝܫܐ. ܘܐܢ ܒ ܒܢܝܢ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܥܘܗܕܢܐ ܘܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܠܗܠܝܢ. ܒܥܠܡܠܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܬܬܠܬܒ܀ [ܗܢ، ܡܢ ܗܒܠ ܕܐܡܢܪܐ ܘܠܕܝܢܐ[ܗܘܘ؟] ܘܠܐܦܘܠܘܓܝܣ: ܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܕܥܒܕܢܐ ܘܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܙܕܩ ܠܒܪܢܝ. ܕܡܛܠ ܚܣܝܐ ܐܡܝܪܐ ܠܗܘܢ. ܕܠܗܘܢ ܦܩܕ ܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܗܢܕܝܢ ܬܘܒ ܕܐܡܪ ܡܪܝ، ܘܐܝܟܢܐ: ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ. ܡܛܠ ܥܡܘܕܝܐ ܗܢܘ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܥܒܕܘ ܡܥܡܕܢܘܬܐ ܐܡܪ. ܘܠܘ ܡܛܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ܀] ܗܢܕܝܢ ܕܐܢ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܬܪܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܘܒܝ ܠܗܬܐ ܕܫܠܝܚܘܢ ܟܕܝܢ ܒܢܝܗܘܢ ܐܘܪܬܕܘܟܣܘ. ܐܦ ܡܬܬܟܪܝܢ ܠܐܡܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܐ: ܕܦܪܘܫ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܘܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܚܠܦ ܗܢܘܢ

Children and parents might have opposing Christological loyalties; so, too, might servants and masters. John, the Stylite of Litarb, another one of Jacob's correspondents, asked him about the case of a person who had been the servant of a heretic. Though the servant suffered afflictions from his heretical master because of his beliefs, he never denied them. What benefit would such a person have?[546]

ܕܐܝܠܘ ܒܚܢܦܘܬܐ: ܘܠܬܫܥܝܬܐ ܬܘܒ ܕܦܠܕܝܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ: ܕܡܛܠ ܛܠܝܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܒܝܬ ܒܗ ܐܬܬܢܝܚܬ ܒܫܡ̈ܘܥܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܗܝ ܦܣܩܐ ܚܬܝܬܘܬܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ. ܠܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܚܡܢܐ ܘܕܝܢܐ ܬܪܝܨܐ ܢܫܒܘܩ '[Addai:] if it is right for Orthodox children to make memorials and Eucharists for their heretical parents? And if it is appropriate for their son—if he is a priest and a monk and they gave him to become a monk among the Orthodox—to make remembrance of them at the Eucharist and to pray for them with incense. Along with these things, whether there is profit for him in these things and for the one on whose behalf they take place when he has died in heresy, is something I want to learn by this question. [Jacob:] There is much perplexity in this question because the precision of the canons of the fathers does not assent to there being a memorial and a Eucharist for unbelievers along with believers. Since, however, the aim of your question is known, that is, what it looks at, it is not right that we neglect it and leave it in confusion. Instead, look at the ancient stories and to the actions which have taken place from time to time by the Fathers, and let us make a distinction among them in accordance with the different doctrines of those who have passed away. If then, they were upholders of the heresy—that is, supporters and proponents on its behalf, and opponents and revilers of the Orthodox faith—then it is not at all right that there be a Eucharist and memorial for them. Instead, it is right that the memory of their name be entirely blotted out, if possible, like enemies of God, so that the person not be brought forth on lips in a casual way. This, however, is the case, even if he was not the cause of the destruction of one of the believers. But if this is the case, it is right for there to be circumspection here, even if they were more evil in the heresy, that a believing person not perish because of scrupulousness, as happened once among the Fathers and they prudently permitted that the names of wicked men who supported heresies be proclaimed in the holy dyptychs. But if the people about whom this question is are from the simple people, and they held to the heresy out of a certain custom, so to speak, and not out of wickedness, not one decision should be made about this. Instead, let it be given to their children: be they priests or laypeople or [persons] wanting to make for them a memorial and Eucharists and prayers. Let it be left to their authority. [As for that which is said by Dionysios and Hippolytos, namely that it is not right that there should be a memorial and Eucharist for unbelievers by the believers: it should be known that it was stated by them about pagans, for they called them 'unbelievers.' At that time, moreover, Mar John said that there should not be a Eucharist for unbelievers; he spoke concerning listeners, those who were not worthy of baptism, and not concerning those who were baptized.] At that point, whether or not they come to have benefit, their Orthodox children will be making Eucharists and prayers on their behalf. We will also make mention of the story of the Maccabees, who offered up sacrifices and Eucharists on behalf of those who had passed away in paganism, and of the story of Palladios the bishop, which is concerning that girl who passed away when she was among the listeners, we will leave the precise determination concerning these things to God, who is merciful and a just judge.' Bedjan, *Nomocanon*, pp. 73-74 contains a shorter version of this canon. I am grateful to Peter Brown for pointing out the similarities between the logic here and that behind the Islamic notion that everyone is born Muslim and it is their parents who make them Jews, Christians or Magians. For this idea, see, Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 4 ([Cairo?], 1955-1956) p. 2048-2049 (*Kitāb al-qadr*, *bāb* 7, no. 25).

[546] A. Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161), p. 243: ܩܘܫ. ܥܒܕܐ ܕܐܢܫ ܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܚܕ ܘܩܒܠ ܐܘܠ̈ܨܢܐ ܡܢܗ ܚܠܦ ܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܟܦܪ. ܐܡܪܢܐ ܡܬܐܠܨܘ ܘܡܢܐ ܘܝܬܪܘܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ. ܦܘܢ. ܡܢ ܡܢܝ ܢܠܦ ܐܢܫ ܠܗܕܐ. ܒܪ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܬܗܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܬܗܘܢ. ܘܬܘܒܝܢ ܫܘܠܡܢܐ.

In such a world in which ecclesiastical affiliations are still very much in flux and far from set in stone, it is not hard to imagine that there might be what one might call confessional code-switching, where a person claimed allegiance to one group or another depending on the situation and the circumstances he found himself in.[547] One thing is clear: people were moving back and forth between different church groups. This was not just going on in rural areas and far away from the centers of theological power. There was confessional shape shifting going on under the noses and in the company of the most elite theological elements of society. Nearing the end of his life, Theodota of Amid encounters a confessional code-switcher near the famous monastery of Qenneshre, the intellectual heart of the Syriac-speaking Miaphysite movement in the seventh century. A foreigner from Garamaeus, this person was among the people from the monastery who came out to meet Theodota. Though the *Life* notes that this old man was honored by the monks of Qenneshre and by no less than the Miaphysite Patriarch Julian as a holy man, Theodota saw through his projected identity and publically called him out as not being a true believer. Though some of the monks doubted Theodota's accusations, the suspect eventually came clean: he was baptized a Nestorian and, going deaf because of ear problems, he had agreed to be circumcised if a Jewish doctor would give him treatment. Theodota was right, yet again.[548] Baptized Nestorian, a convert to Judaism, and living among the spiritual elites and highest

ܗܟܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܟ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܟ. ܘܝܕܝܥܐ ܕܟܠܢܫ ܐܝܟ ܚܘܒܗ ܘܗܝܡܢܘܬܗ ܢܣܒ ܬܡܢ ܦܘܪܥܢܐ. 'John: The servant of a certain heretic suffered and endured afflictions for the sake of Christ and died but did not deny. How is he reckoned and what benefit will he possess? Jacob: Learn this from our Lord: when people were drawing near to him and seeking healing, he was speaking in the following way: "It will be for you according to your faith." It is known that everyone will there receive recompense in accordance with his love and faith.' My translation. ET also available in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 223.

547 I am influenced here by Peter Burke's comments on 'occasionalism' on pp. 94-96 of his *What is Cultural History?*, (Cambridge/Malden, MA, 2004), and also by conversations with Richard Payne.

548 St Mark's Jerusalem, 199, fols. 559a-559b (sections 173-174 in my edition).

leadership of the Miaphysite church—his confessional passport had acquired a number of stamps in the course of his life.

The *Life* of Theodota gives us another report of a confessional code switcher. Earlier in the story, Theodota had gotten word of a *faux* holy man going about the region of the Arsanias River claiming to be Theodota himself. He would mix with the heretics and act as a heretic, the text tells us; similarly, he would mix with the Orthodox and act as an Orthodox. The *Life* suggests that the real motivation of Pseudo-Theodota was the large amount of gold he was amassing. The false holy man is eventually confronted by the real Theodota who exposes his fraud. Demons possess him and he confesses publicly his true theological colors. 'I am a Nestorian,' he wails before Theodota, 'I do not agree with the Orthodox, nor with the Chalcedonians.' Theodota drives out the demons and the man becomes properly Orthodox.[549] Now Miaphysite, now Chalcedonian, now Nestorian: confessional shape shifting was easy, common and perhaps even lucrative in this environment.[550]

Jacob's canons speak about Orthodox children celebrating memorials for their heretical parents and heretical parents donating their children to Orthodox monasteries, but the Orthodox-heretical divide might exist in the same generation, within the same person, and this diverse doctrinal heritage might provide another opportunity for confessional code-switching. Such hybrid figures defied easy

[549] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 554b (sections 118-119 in my edition).

[550] Although the case is slightly different, mention might also be made of the Christian named Severos who claimed to be Moses and thereby took much gold and other forms of property from Jews in Syria. See A. Harrak, trans. *The Chronicle of Zuqnīn: Parts III and IV. A.D. 488-775* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 163-164. According to Theophanes, this happened in AD 720-721 and Severos claimed to be the Messiah and Son of God; see C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813*, (Oxford, 1997), p. 554. It is Michael the Syrian who gives the man's name as Severos; he also adds that Severos claimed to be the Messiah or sent by the Messiah. See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p.490 (FT) = vol. 4, p. 456 (Syriac).

categorization and had multiple ecclesiastical loyalties which exasperated more institutionally-embedded church leaders. We have a good example of such a figure from a Syriac source originating in Iraq. In a letter written while he was Bishop of Nineveh and during the Byzantine occupation of northern Iraq after 628, East Syrian Isho'yahb III (d. ca. 658) bemoaned the construction of a Miaphysite church near the dung heap outside one of the gates of Nineveh by a group of people whom he referred to as the 'dung of the church.' The leader of this group of people, Isho'yahb noted, had an Orthodox (i.e., East Syrian/Nestorian) father and an heretical mother.[551] This individual, Isho'yahb observed with disdain, went from his mother's doctrine to his father's doctrine, to 'true paganism' and intercommunion with heretics.[552] Fear of the authorities drove him back to Orthodoxy (i.e., the Church of the East), but once the fear had subsided, he returned 'like a dog to his vomit' to his old ways and to actively supporting the work of heretical agitators. For such a person, confessional allegiance seemed to have been a function of many things and a concern for true doctrine was at best only one of them.

In this story, the half-Miaphysite, half-Nestorian leader's boundary crossing was not unique. Isho'yahb angrily lamented that among those helping in the construction of this Miaphysite church and with its activities there were former Nestorians who had become Miaphysites. They were, he wrote, the ancient offspring of that heresy and

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[551] Note that the Seventy-Second Canon of the Quinisext Council forbade marriage between Orthodox individuals (male or female) and heretics (male or female). See H.R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees*, vol. 14 of P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series* (New York, 1900), p. 397.

[552] Compare this with Maximos the Confessor's alleged heritage in his Syriac *Life*: his father was a Samaritan and his mother was the daughter of a Persian Jew—'mixed' families were dangerous. See S.P. Brock, 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor,' *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), p. 314. I am grateful to Peter Brown for this point.

belonged to it both by their own will and by their own volition. Miaphysites were even being helped by people who had converted *away* from their confession: Isho'yahb observed that the prosperity of the Miaphysite community was in part the result of the help it was getting from former Miaphysites who had converted to the religion of the rulers (i.e., the Byzantines) but who were still aiding their former brethren. This was an environment in which people were moving around quite freely between confessions, Christian and non-, and where religious identity was being used instrumentally.[553]

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[553] See R. Duval, ed., *Išōʿyahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: Series Secunda, 64) (Paris, 1904), pp. 82-83: ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ ܘܡܓܕ̈ܦܢܐ ܕܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܡܠܬܐ. ܚܝܠܐ ܕܫܢܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܫܩܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܣܒܪܐ ܫܐܕܢܝܐ ܘܙܒܢܐ ܠܗܢ ܠܫܘܦܪܗܘܢ ܐܫܟܚܘ ܡܢ ܥܠܠ̈ܬܐ ܕܝܕ̈ܝܥܢ. ... ܕܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܣܓܝܐܘܬܐ ܕܡܥܕܪ̈ܢܐ ܒܝ̈ܫܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܩܕܝܡ ܡܢ ܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܗܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܕܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ... ܘܕܐܪܒܥ ܥܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܥܒܕܢܘܬܗ ܕܣܛܢܐ ܕܡܬܬܙܝܥܐ ܒܒ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣܢܘܬܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܒܚܘܒܐ ܕܩܘܫܬܐ ܕܒܗ ܢܚܘܢ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܐܙܠܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܙܠܘ ܘܐܬܩܪܒܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܥܕܝܢ. ܘܡܕܡ ܠܐ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܚܟܡܬܐ ܡܠܠܘ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܒܥܘܬܐ ܕܣܘܟܠܬܢܘܬܐ ܩܪܒܘ. ܘܠܐ ܬܚܘܝܬܐ ܕܢܩܝܦܘܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ ܚܘܘ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܡܥܒܕ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܘܝܢ ܠܦܓܥܐ ܕܩܕܡ ܫܠܝ̈ܛܢܐ ܡܠܝ̈ܠܐ ܐܫܟܚܘ ܒܗ ܠܡܓܡܪ. ܢܦܩܘ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ ܕܝ ܟܬܠܗܘܢ ܘܦܢܘ ܠܡܙܥܙܥ ܠܢ. ܐܫܟܚܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܠܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܬܡܢ ܕܡܥܕܪ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܢܦܩܘ ܠܬܚܝܬ ܩܩܠܬܐ ܕܩܕܡ ܬܪܥܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܬܢ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܐܢܘܢ ܩܩܠܬܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܘܥܒܕܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܝܬ ܒܙܚܐ ܘܡܘܝܩܐ ܒܫܡ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܒܝܬܐ ܠܦܓܥܐ ܩܪܝܒܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܬܚܘܬܗ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܝܢܐ ܡܬܐܠܝܢ ܠܡܐܬܐ. ܘܡܢ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܦ ܟܠܠܬܐ ܠܫܓܘܫܝܐ ܡܥܒܕܝܢ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ. ܘܡܬܪܐܝܬ ܡܢ ܟܢܘ̈ܫܝܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܡܓܕܦܝܢ ܒܟܠ ܝܘܡ ܥܠ ܥܕܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܦܘ̈ܡܐ ܡܪ̈ܝܪܐ. ܘܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܡܥܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ. ܠܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܬܘܡܐ ܕܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܘܠܗܘܢ ܕܕܝܢ. ܘܕܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܒܢܝܐ ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܝ ܒܢܝܐ. ܘܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܒܐܡܬܐ ܡܫܬܡܪ ܕܪܫܥ. ܘܐܦ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܘܬ ܩܝܡ ܠܚܕ ܠܗ. ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܐܚܐ ܥܡ ܒܪܘܫܠܝܡ ܐܬܪܘܬܗܘܢ. ܘܡܢ ܐܚܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܪܘܫܠܝܡ ܗܪܛܝܩܐ: ܘܫܪܝ ܡܢ ܗܪ ܕܐܚܐ: ܘܙܕܐ ܡܠܠ ܒ̱ ܝܢ ܗܪ ܕܐܚܐ: ܘܐܬܬܥܒܠ ܬܘܒ ܟܗܪ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܦ ܒ̱ ܝܢ ܫܘܦܬܐ ܫܬܬܬܐ ܗܪ ܕܠܡܟܪ̈ܝܐ ܟܠܝܐ. ܘܟܗܪ ܒ ܬܘܒ ܟܡ ܫܘܦܬܐ ܡܟܬܒܬܐ ܫܘܦܬܬܐ ܕܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ. ܘܟܕ ܡܢ ܫܢܝܐ ܠܡܟܝܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܢ ܘܦܘܫܐ ܕܬܐܪܬܐ ܐܬܬܦܝܣ: ܡܠܠ ܠܘܬ ܟܪܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܦܬܚ. ܟܪܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܣܠܬܐ ܕܡܬܘܬܐ ܘܦܥܠܐ ܕܥܠܝ̈ܬܐ ܐܢ ܟܘܢ. ܗܫܐ ܡܬܕܪܫ ܐܝܟ ܟܠܟܐ ܟܠ ܬܘܟܘܗ ܠܘܬ ܟܪܬܐ ܕܡܪ̈ܕܐ ܕܡܕܡ ܟܕ ܐܡܟܐ ܫܘܦܪ. ܐܬܬܦܝܣ ܒܫܐܝܐ ܕܪܒܘܬܐ ܘܠܡܣܩ̈ܒܠܐ ܕܪܘܫܥܐ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܬܘܟܠܢܐ ܘܡܟܠܝܢܐ ܕܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܚܟܡܝܢ... '...as regards these wicked people and blasphemers, whom the text is about, the force of their insanity has taken them with demonic hope and they have found a time for their prosperity through causes that are known:...Second, the great number of wicked helpers who were formerly of their heresy, but who are now of the doctrine of those who are in authority... Fourth, along with these things, the activity of Satan, which is stirred up in disobedient children who do not hold fast to the love of truth that they might be saved by it; therefore, they have gone in the way they have and they have drawn near as they are accustomed to: speaking no word of wisdom and neither presenting a sensible petition nor demonstrating evidence of a connection to our Lord. They have been completely incapable of doing anything worthy of a meeting before the reasonable rulers. They completed their task and returned to stir us up; they found a ruler who was there who would completely help them and they went out to beneath the dung heap which is before the gate of our city, even as they are the dung of the church, and they made for themselves a place of scorn and contempt with the name of 'church' at a place close to all

The fluidity in personal identities that existed was mirrored by a fluidity in the ownership of real estate and church property: churches and church vessels were changing hands between rival groups and this raised its own series of questions which confronted Jacob in his canons. What should be done, Addai asks, to a priest who takes an altar and its vessels from Chalcedonians and then gives them back?[554] John the Stylite reported to Jacob an instance of zealous Miaphysites seizing a church from heretics. Before a bishop was able to pray in it, they had held a liturgy in it and celebrated a Eucharist. There was also the opposite situation: a church of the Miaphysites seized by the heretics and then re-taken by the Orthodox and used for a service before a Bishop could say the appropriate prayers. What did Jacob make of such cases?[555] Individual conversions between confessions might happen: in another letter,

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those who by habit are forced to go there to relieve themselves, and from here, they are every day stirring up causes for disturbance, especially with the constant blasphemies which they are putting forth every day against the church of God with impudent mouths. As for those who honor them among our people: they are the ancient offspring of their heresy: they are right for them and they belong to them both by nature and by volition. And as for the one who is considered by all to be the leader, whom the age has amply honored, who is from a Christian Orthodox father but a Christian heretical mother: he began from the [doctrine] of his mother and swiftly proceeded to that of his father and after these things was carried to true paganism--something clear to many. Moreover, after disturbing paganism, [he was carried] to communion with heretics. When he had been overcome by worldly reproach, like the pang of conscience, he quickly came back to the church of God so that he was delivered from the fear of death and the dread of the rulers. Now, like a dog to his vomit, he has returned [cf. 1 Peter 2:22] with cunning force to the bitter root which shot forth from him by means of his mother, and is an upholder of the trust of those who agitate for wickedness and a supplier of their necessities.' LT can be found in J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3.1, (Rome, 1725), p. 115 and in R. Duval, trans., *Išō'yahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: SS 2, 64) (Paris, 1905), pp. 63-64. For a discussion of this letter and its historical context (after the Byzantine conquest of northern Iraq in 628), see J.-M. Fiey, 'Īšō'yaw le Grand: Vie du caltholicos nestorien Īšō'yaw III d'Adiabène (580-659),' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 35 (1969), pp. 327-329.

[554] A. Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) (Louvain, 1975) p. 259: ܐܕܝ. ܡܢܐ ܘܳܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܡܕܒܚܐ ܘܡܐܢܘܗܝ܆ ܡܢ ܟܠܩܕܘܢܝܐ ܘܗܦܟ ܝܗܒ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܐܢ ܡܢ ܨܒܝܢܗ ܝܗܒ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܬܐܪܫܦܣܘܬ ܕܝܠܗ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܗܘܐ. 'Addai: What is appropriate to happen to a priest who takes an altar and its vessels from the Chalcedonians and gives them back to them? Jacob: If it is by his will that he gives them to them, his deposition should take place.' My translation. ET also available in in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 236.

[555] Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161), p. 244: ܫܐܠ. ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܘ ܗܘܘ ܕܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܚܣܝܢܐ ܥܒܠܗ ܗܝܟܠܐ ܡܢ ܐܪܛܝܩܘ. ܘܥܕ ܠܐ ܡܨܠܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܒܗ̇ ܘ

Isho'yahb III complained about a foolish man (who had previously been a Nestorian) who was 'received in the great city of the heretics' (i.e., Tikrit) and who partook in their mysteries as well as in their faith.[556] Mass conversions from one confession to another were also a possibility. An entire village of heretics returns to the true faith, John tells Jacob, what should we now do with their mysteries?[557] In letters written perhaps a century later, ca. 791-792, the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I would report that thirteen churches and more than 2,000 people, including clergy in the (Iraqi) city of Najran, had

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ܗܘ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܘܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܡܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܥܠܝܗ̇. ܗܟܘܬ ܘܡܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܬ ܥܠ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܐܬܚܛܦܬ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܘ ܘܗܦܟܘ ܘܥܒܕܘ ܒܗ̇ ܘܠܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܠܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܕܢܐܬܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܠܛܢܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܦܩܢܘܬܐ. ܘܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܙܐ ܛܢܢܗܘܢ ܘܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܚܣܝܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܘܡܚܣܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܚܘܒܐ ܘܡܕܟܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܪܣܝܣ. ܠܥܕܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܢܣܒܘ. ܘܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܢܫܒܚ ܐܢܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܢܥܕܠ. ܗܟܢܐ ܘܐܦܢ ܕܐܬܚܛܦܬ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܘ ܘܗܦܟܘ ܢܣܒܘܗ̇. ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܒܗ̇ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܪܐܙܢܝܬܐ ܒܠܥܕ ܡܢ ܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܒܛܢܢܐ ܐܘ ܒܠܐ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܥܒܕܘ ܗܘ ܕܒܚܐ ܚܝܐ ܕܩܪܒܘ ܡܚܣܝܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܠܗ ܠܡܕܒܚܐ. 'John: In the case of Orthodox individuals who in burning zeal took a church from the heretics and when a bishop was not near, they made a liturgy and a Eucharist in it: what do you say about it? In the same way, what do you say concerning people whose church has been seized by heretics and [then] returned and [who then] performed a service in it and who did not suffer their bishop come? Jacob: They have a defense in their zeal and God, who saw their zeal and their faith, was forgiving of them and one who freed them of guilt and cleansed them from heresies. With respect to the church which they took, let their bishop praise them and not find blame. The same applies to those whose church was seized by heretics and they took it back: they should not perform a sacramental liturgy in it apart from the prayer of bishops. If, however, through zeal or lack of knowledge they performed a service, the living sacrifice which they offered up was pardons them and the altar as well.' My translation. ET also available in in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 224.

[556] See R. Duval, ed., *Išōʿyahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: SS 2, 64) (Paris, 1904), p. 165: ܐܡܪܝܢ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܚܙܘ. ܕܟܕ ܥܒܪ ܬܚܘܡܐ ܡܥܪܒܝܐ ܕܩܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܕܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ ܓܒܪܐ ܗܘ̇ ܣܟܠܐ: ܐܬܩܒܠ ܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܕܗܪܛܝܩܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܬܡܢ. ܘܐܫܬܘܬܦ ܒܩܘܕܫܝܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܚܦܝܛ ܗ̇ܘ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ 'For those who saw are saying that when that foolish man had crossed the western frontiers of the Orthodox community, he was received in the great city of the heretics by those people. He partook in their consecrated elements, just as in their faith, as he was eager to do...' cf. Fiey, 'Īšōʿyaw le Grand,' p. 329, n. 1.

[557] Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) pp. 243-244: ܝܘܚܢܢ. ܬܗܦܘܟ ܐܢ ܩܘܪܝܬܐ ܟܠܗ̇ ܕܐܪܛܝܩܐ ܠܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ. ܡܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܠܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܢܫܬܕܪܘܢ ܠܘܬ ܒܢܝ̈ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ. ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܓܕܫܬ ܗܕܐ. ܟܕ ܐܝܬܝܘ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܗܓܪ̈ܝܐ. ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܫܩܠܘ ܡܢ ܐܬܪܐ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. ܘܟܕ ܢܟܐ ܡܢ ܬܐܪܬܗܘܢ ܘܐܝܬܝܘܗܝ ܠܝ. ܫܕܪܬܗ ܠܒܢܝ̈ ܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. 'John: If an entire village of heretics returns to the true faith, what should we do with their mysteries? Jacob: Let them be sent to supporters of their faith. Indeed, this has happened to me: once some Hagarenes brought along the Eucharist which they had taken from the region of the Greeks. Pulled by their conscience, they brought it to me: I sent it to the supporters of the doctrine of those Greeks.' My translation. ET also available in in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 224.

rejected their former Julianism and to join the (Nestorian) Church of the East. They now wanted a bishop consecrated for them and Timothy was happy to be of help.[558]

Aiding and abetting putative rivals was also not a problem for some. In the *Life* of Simeon of the Olives (d. 734), we have a curious case where groups which were supposed to be enemies were actually helping one another out when it came to churches—at least partially. Simeon's attempts to build a church outside of Nisibis are hampered by Nestorian priests. Their tactic? They were forbidding Nestorians from working on the building of the church, either with or without pay. For at least some 'Nestorians' there seems to have been nothing objectionable in helping to build a church to be used by Miaphysites.[559] In the case of the construction of the church in Nineveh that elicited Isho'yahb III's ire, he lamented the support heretics (i.e., Miaphysites) were receiving from those among 'our people;' planning to go to Tikrit himself to speak with the rulers about the intolerable situation, Isho'yahb expected little if any help from local Nestorians. With one exception, a man named Kabab, they

[558] See O. Braun, ed. *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), p. 151 (letter to Rabban Sergios): ܒܕ ܡܘܕܥܝܢ ܠܢܟܦܘܬܟ. ܕܝܫܘܥ ܗܘ ܕܐܪܡܝ ܡܨܝܕܬܐ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܫܡܝܐ ܒܝܡܗ ܕܥܠܡܐ. ܘܨܕ ܒܗ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܟܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܙܥܘܪ ܣܓܝ. ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܨܕ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܢܓܪܢ ܕܥܠ ܓܢܒ ܚܝܪܬܐ ܝܬܒܐ: ܗ̇ܝ ܕܥܕܡܐ ܢܝܪܐ ܕܒܝܫܘܬܗ ܕܝܘܠܝܢܐ [ܕܝܘܠܝܢܐ] ܢܓܕܐ ܗܘܬ ܒܪܡ ܠܗܫܐ. ܘܐܬܘ ܠܘܬܢ ܟܗ ܓܒܪܝܢ ܒܡܢܝܢܐ ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܩܠܝܪ̈ܝܩܐ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܘܡܫܡ̈ܫܢܐ. ܥܡ ܗܘ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܕܗܘܦܠܐ ܕܥܡܐ ܘܒܥܘ ܡܢܢ ܕܢܡܫܘܚ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ. ܘܡܛܝܒܝܢ ܚܢܢ ܗܕܐ ܠܡܥܒܕ. 'As we make known to you, venerable one, that Jesus, who threw the fishing net of the Kingdom of Heaven into the sea of the world and by it caught more or less the entire world, has in this time caught the city of Najran, which sits next to Ḥirta, which till now was drawing the yoke of the wickedness of Julian. But now, 25 men have come to us, among them clerics—priests and deacons—along with most of the mass of the people, and they have requested from us that we anoint a bishop for them. We are preparing to do this.' See also Timothy's reference to this event in his letter to the monks of Mar Maroun, in R.J. Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I* (Città del Vaticano, 1956), p. ܩܡܗ: ܘܬܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܘܐܦ ܢܓܪܢ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܝܕܝܥܬܐ: ܗܝ ܕܒܗܪܣܝܣ ܕܝܘܠܝܢܐ ܐܚܝܕܐ ܗܘܬ. ܒܫܢܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܬ ܬܠܬܥܣܪ ܥܕܬܐ ܐܬܚܝܕ ܥܡܢ. ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܕܥܒܪ ܠܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܬܪܝܢ ܐܠܦܝܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ. 'And again, even the well-known city of Najran which was in the grasp of the heresy of Julian: in the past year, thirteen churches were united with us, an assembly which exceeded 2,000 people.' For the date of the letter to Sergios and an FT of this passage from Timothy's letter to the monks of Mar Maroun, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 60. NB: Timothy's letter clearly identifies this Najran as the Najran near al-Ḥīra and not the Najran in South Arabia.

[559] Mardin 8/259, fols. 112b-113a (section 22 in my translation).

were all helpers of the wicked heretics.[560] This is the brick and mortar equivalent of Miaphysite scribes writing out theological polemics for their Christian rivals.

Given that people were willing to subordinate the importance of Chalcedon and precise Christological doctrines to other concerns in their self-presentation and behavior, it should come as no surprise that at the level of the sacraments and church ritual, there seems to have been sharing and overlap between people supposed to be holding opposing Christologies: Addai's questions reflect a milieu in which Miaphysite priests were performing rites for Christians who strictly speaking belonged to heretical and rival churches. This was in part the case because neither the Chalcedonians nor the Miaphysites, it seems, were able to supply clergy to all of the people who agreed with them doctrinally. Is it right, Addai asked Jacob, for us to be escorts in the funeral processions of heretics and to bury them? According to Jacob, if the person who has died is in a city or a village where there are clerics who agree with his doctrine, and the deceased had not asked for an Orthodox (i.e., Miaphysite) burial, then he should not receive one. But if there are no heretical clergy nearby, then Miaphysite clergy should bury him, regardless of whether he requested such a burial.[561] There were simply not

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[560] See Duval, ed., *Išō'yahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: SS 2, 64) (Paris, 1904), p. 83 (text cited above in footnote, X). Also see Isho'yahb's comments, later in the same letter, about his own impending visit to Tikrit to speak to the authorities there about the situation. He expected little support from local Nestorians, p. 84: 'Look now, through the help of God, I have begun to travel [there], though I am persuaded that I must stand in the middle of Tikrit like in a theater of the wicked, for apart from Kabab, who perhaps will be found to be a moderate, many of those who are with him are against my cause and are helpers of the wicked.' ܗܐ ܒܥܘܕܪܢܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܫܪܝܬ ܠܡܪܕܐ ܟܕ ܡܦܣ ܐܢܐ ܕܒܡܨܥܬ ܬܓܪܝܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܬܐܛܪܘܢ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܠܡܩܡ. ܕܣܛܪ ܡܢܗ ܕܟܒܒ ܡܢ ܕܟܐܝܬ ܕܒܪ ܡܫܬܟܚ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܥܡܗ: ܠܩܘܒܠܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܝܠܝ ܘܡܥܕܪܢܐ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ. See Fiey, 'Īšō'yahw le Grand,' p. 329, for discussion of Isho'yahb's planned trip to Tikrit.

[561] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 158, 160, which contains typos. Mardin 310, fols. 204b-205a, reads: ܐܕܝ.: ܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܠܘܐ ܘܢܩܒܘܪ ܐܢܫܐ ܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܐܢ ܗܘ ܕܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܐܘ ܒܩܘܪܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܗ ܩܠܝܪ̈ܝܩܘ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܬܪܥܝܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܗܘ ܠܐ ܫܐܠ ܘܒܥܐ ܘܢܦܩ ܕܢܬܩܒܪ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ. ܠܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܠܘܐ ܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܬܕܘܟܣܘ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܬܪܥܝܬܗ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܫܐܠ ܢܬܠܘܐ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܣܒܪܝܢ ܗܟܢ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܬܪܥܝܬܗ: ܘܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ، ܢܬܒܥܐ ܘܐܟܡܢܐ ܕܕܘܟܬܐ: ܐܘ ܟܦܪ ܐܘ ܩܘܪܝܬܐ ܐܘ ܥܝܪܐ: ܘܡܫܬܡܠܐ ܬܟܐܝܬ ܝܘ ܚܕ ܐܪ̈ܬܕܘܟܣܘ.

enough priests to go around: another one of Jacob's canons informs us that a number of priests were required to perform the Eucharist in many villages in a single day.[562] We see this problem in manpower in the *Life* of Theodota where he comes across a boy in a village who is so ill that the villagers have already dug his grave. They beg Theodota to stay there because they had no priest to escort the boy's funeral procession.[563] Concern about the doctrinal purity of priests was a luxury available only to those who had an abundance of clergy from which to choose; what was important was the existence and

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ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܢܫܐܠ ܗܘ. ܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗ̇ ܕܦܠܓܐ ܕܢܬܩܒܪ ܡܩܪܒܬ ܣܓܝ ܐܠܐ ܘܐܦ ܡܢ ܒܠܥܕ ܕܢܫܐܠ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܝܠܗ ܢܒܥܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܘܐܦ ܕܢܬܡܛܐ ܠܗ. ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܢܒܥܐ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗ. ܒܢܫܡܬܐ ܐܚܪܝܬܐ. ܘܐܦ. ܕܢܬܚܠܨ ܡܢ ܚܝܘܬ ܚܩܠܐ ܘܢܥܘܠ ܠܛܝܪܐ ܘܢܙܕܘܕ ܙܘܕܐ ܕܦܘܪܩܢܐ: ܘܢܫܬܕܪ ܠܘܬ ܡܪܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܫܡܗ ܐܬܟܬܒ: ܐܢ ܗܘ ܠܐ ܕܚܩܗ ܠܗܕܐ ܡܢܗ ܟܕ ܡܫܬܐܠ ܘܡܬܟܬܫ ܘܐܡܐܢ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܐܠ ܘܠܐ ܐܡܐܢ. ܠܐܠܗܐ ܢܬܡܣܪ ܨܒܘܬܐ. ܐܢ ܢܣܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܢܣܒ. ܢܬܠܘܐ ܘܢܬܩܒܪ. ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܐ ܘܛܟܣܐ ܕܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ.
'Addai: whether it is appropriate that we accompany [the funeral procession of] and bury heretical people? Jacob: If it is in a village or a city where they have clerics and people who agree with their doctrine, and the person does not ask and request and desire to be buried by believers, it is not right that they be accompanied [in the funeral procession] by Orthodox people, but instead [they should be accompanied] by people who hold their doctrine. But if he has asked, let him be accompanied. And if [it is the case that] many of the holders of his doctrine are far away, and he is an alien and stranger to the place or a traveler or a captive, and is found dying near Orthodox people, [then] even if he does not ask, it is not appropriate that he be buried. And even if it is apart from he himself asking for it, he should be given the Eucharist. And even if he does not ask for it himself, in his final breaths, he should be plucked away from wild animals and enter into the sheepfold and be furnished with [the means of] salvation for the journey, and be sent to the Lord, in whose name he was inscribed—if he does not reject this from himself when he is asked, and refuse and reject. But if he is not asked and he does not reject, then let the matter be given to God. If he takes the Eucharist and if he does not take [it], he should [still] be accompanied and he should be buried according to the custom and the rite of the Christians.' For this passage, cf. the LT of Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 159, 161. P. Bedjan, *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei* (Paris, 1898), p. 70, contains a shortened version of this canon.

[562] Mardin 310, fols. 210a-210b: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܡܫܝܢ ܟܣܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ: ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܫܬܝܘ ܡܕܡ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܘܥܡܝܐ ܐܫܬܝܘ ܢܣܒܪܘܢ. ܘܢܚܫܒܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܨܒܝܢ ܠܡܬܬܘܬܦܘ ܒܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܒܝܘܡܐ ܗܘ ܬܘܒ ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܠܗ ܗܘܐ. ܠܘ ܓܝܪ ܡܕܡ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܘܥܡܝܐ ܐܟܠܘ ܐܘ ܐܫܬܝܘ. ܐܦ ܐܢ ܐܪܡܝܘ ܒܗ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܒܟܣܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܫܝܚܘܬܗ ܘܐܫܬܝܘ ܐܢܘܢ. ܘܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܓܝܪ. ܡܢܟܣܝܢ، ܠܕܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܐܬܪܡܝܘ ܒܗ ܒܟܣܐ ܗܘ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܘܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܢܦܠ ܒܗ ܥܕܡܐ ܕܢܬܡܫܐ ܒܐܣܦܘܓܐ. ܐܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܣ̈ܓܝܐܐ. ܕܐܦ ܟܕ ܡܦܩܕܝܢ ܩܘܪ̈ܝܐ ܣ̈ܓܝܐܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܒܝܘܡܐ ܚܕ. ܘܒܟܠܚܕ ܕܘܟܬܐ. ܕܢܝܩܪܘܢ ܘܢܫܡܫܘܢ ܠܟܣܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܫܬܐܠܝܢ. ܘܡܬܢܣܒܝܢ ܘܡܫܬܘܬܦܝܢ ܒܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܐܢ ܨܒܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ❖ 'Those who serve the holy cup should not suppose that they have drunk from something for ordinary bodily drinking and think that if they want to take the holy mysteries again on that day, they are not permitted. For it is not something common and bodily that they have eaten and drunk even if they pour water into the holy chalice to clean it and they drink it. Even this [water] in fact possesses the blood of God when it is poured into the holy chalice, [as does] everything which falls into it until it is wiped clean with a sponge. Indeed, there are many priests who are commanded to celebrate the Eucharist in many villages in one day, and in each place, they have to honor and serve the holy cup, and they communicate and participate in the Mysteries if they want to.'

[563] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 554a (section 114 in my edition).

availability of a clergyman as an all-around ritual practitioner.[564] To make a modern comparison, they would not have been worried about where their doctor had attended medical school: what was important was that he was a doctor at all.

Addai also wanted to know from Jacob whether it was appropriate for an Orthodox clergyman or monk to take part in the funeral procession of an 'heretical Chalcedonian,' with lay people, though abstaining from chanting while processing. Furthermore, was it right for the Miaphysites to allow Chalcedonian clerics to take part in Orthodox funeral processions, also while refraining from chanting?[565]

What if, Addai asked, an Orthodox clergyman found himself in the company of Chalcedonians who had no priest and who wanted him to administer their own Eucharist to them? If the Orthodox priest did not enter the altar of the heretical Chalcedonians and if he did not himself communicate, would this be acceptable?[566] George, Bishop of the Arabs, Jacob's contemporary and friend, has left us a canon stipulating that a priest or a deacon who gives the Eucharist to heretics is to be

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[564] I am grateful to Peter Brown for this point and this turn of phrase.

[565] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 160, 162. Mardin 310, fol. 205a, is free from Lamy's typos: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܐܙܠ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܐܘ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ: ܥܡ ܠܘܝܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ ܟܠܩܝܕܘܢܝܐ: ܒܝܢܬ ܥ̈ܠܡܝܐ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܙܡܪ: ܐܘ ܕܢܦܣ ܠܩܠܝܪ̈ܝܩܘ ܟܠܩܝܕܘܢܝܐ ܕܢܐܙܠܘܢ ܥܡܢ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܙܡܪܝܢ ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗ̈ܠܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܡܢ ܚܘܒܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܣܩܢܢ ܡܕܡ. ܐܠܐ ܟܡܐ ܙܒܢܝܢ ܐܦ ܡܘܬܪܝܢ 'Addai: If it is right for an Orthodox cleric or monk to go with a funeral procession of heretical Chalcedonians, among lay people, while not chanting? Or is it right that we assent to Chalcedonian clerics going with us while they do not chant? Jacob: These things take place out of the love of humanity and do not injure anything, but rather, how many times have they been beneficial?!' P. Bedjan, *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei* (Paris, 1898), p. 70, contains a shortened version of this canon.

[566] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 162: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܐܪܬܘܕܘܟܣܐ. ܕܟܕ ܡܫܬܟܚ ܥܡ ܚܠܩܝܕܘܢ̈ܝܐ. ܘܐܡܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܕܢܬܠ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܢܛܪ ܥܡܗܘܢ. ܘܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ. ܕܢܣܒ ܘܢܬܠ ܠܗܘܢ. ܟܕ ܗܘ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܘܬܦ ܘܠܡܕܒܚܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܥܐܠ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܕܐ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ. ܐܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܦܝܣ ܠܡܥܒܕ ܗܕܐ. ܐܝܟ ܡܫܬܘܬܦ ܠܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ ܢܩܒܠ ܡܣܡ ܒܪܝܫܐ܀
'Addai: if it is right for an Orthodox clergyman who, when found to be with Chalcedonians and they are speaking to him, to give to them from their Eucharist which is kept with them, but they do not have a clergyman with them to take and give to them, while he [sc. the Orthodox priest] does not communicate and does not enter their altar. Jacob: He should not at all do something like this. Indeed, he who is persuaded to do something like this should receive punishment like a heretic.'

deposed,[567] and we have examples from the *Life* of Theodota of clergy knowingly and unknowingly giving the mysteries to people whom they should have excluded. Writing in perhaps 684,[568] Miaphysite Patriarch Athanasios of Balad condemned Orthodox priests who knowingly and willingly baptized Nestorians, Julianists and other heretics and who gave them the Eucharist.[569] Whatever boundaries certain leaders might have liked to have established between people holding opposing Christological views were not so clear when it came to real life and the administration of the most important ritual and sacramental acts in the Christian faith. Life was bigger than ideology.

This, then, is the religious landscape we get through the lens of these Syriac sources. The lives of members of rival Christian communities were closely intertwined, as were the lives of their clergy. Miaphysite priests were giving the Eucharist to Nestorians and Julianists and also to other heretics, presumably Chalcedonians. Miaphysite priests were filling in and administering the Eucharist of the Chalcedonians to Chalcedonians when there were no Chalcedonian priests to be found. Miaphysite monasteries were knowingly hosting heretics and giving them communion. Even the

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[567] Bedjan, p. 42, *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei*, (Paris, 1898), p. 42: ܓܐܘܪܓܝ: ܩܫܝܫܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܕܝܗܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ: ܢܫܬܪܐ ‘George: A priest or a deacon who gives the Eucharist to the heretics shall be deposed.’

[568] For this date, see the marginal note in Mardin 310, fol. 183b. Also, cf. A. Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonsessammlungen: Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde I. Westsyrische Originalurkunden 1, A* (CSCO 307: Subsidia 35) (Louvain, 1975), p. 201.

[569] Syriac text and FT in F. Nau, ‘Littérature canonique syriaque inédite,’ *Revue de l’orient chrétien* 14 (1909), p. 130, but I take my Syriac text from Mardin 310, fols. 184b-185a, an eighth-century ms. and the oldest witness to the text (see Vööbus, *Syrische Kanonsessammlungen: Ein Beitrag zur Quellenkunde I*, pp. 200-201), which is slightly different from Nau’s printed text: ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢ ܗܘ؛ ܕܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܗܢ̈ܐ ܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܘ̈ܣ: ܢܫܠܡ ܡܚܟܡܢܘܬܐ ܡܨܒܝܢܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ: ܠܢܣܛܘܪ̈ܝܢܐ ܘܠܝܘܠܝܢܝ̈ܣܛܐ: ܐܘ ܠܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܒܥܕܠܘܬܗ ܘܒܝܢ ܚܢܢ. ܕܫܦܩ ܕܝܢ. ܦܣܩܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܦܩ ܡܢ ܣܢ̈ܐ: ܡܢܢ ܘܡܢ ܢܟ̈ܦܐ ܐܚ̈ܝܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦ̈ܐ ܕܡܕܢܚܐ: ܥܠ ܟܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ: ܐܝܢܐ ܕܡܡܪܚ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܡܕܡ ܠܡܥܒܕ܀ ‘Concerning the fact that no person from among all the Orthodox priests should knowingly and willingly administer holy baptism or participation in the holy mysteries to Nestorians and to Julianists or to anybody else from the other heretics: we have judged that the decision which has gone out from us and from our venerable brothers, the bishops of the east, by means of anathemas on each priest or deacon who dares to do something like this, suffices.’

Miaphysite Patriarch and monks of the most important monastery in the Miaphysite church could admire a holy man who was really a crypto-Nestorian-turned-Jew. Miaphysites were leading funeral processions for Chalcedonians and burying them. Chalcedonians were seizing Miaphysite church buildings and Miaphysites were seizing Chalcedonian church buildings. Structures might change hands more than once. Liturgical vessels were also going back and forth between the communities. Nestorians were helping build Miaphysite churches. Chalcedonian and Miaphysite ascetics were living together. Chalcedonians might have Miaphysite servants. Chalcedonian parents donated their children to Miaphysite monasteries and their children would hold Miaphysite memorial services for them when they had passed away.

It seems that just about anything went: in a situation like this, what exactly was the use of labels like ‘Orthodox’ or ‘heretic,’ ‘Chalcedonian’ or ‘Nestorian’? As a predictor of patterns of social behavior, interaction and association, it must not have been very reliable. Indeed, John of Litarb had written to Jacob a letter full of canonical questions and Jacob had taken his time in responding. One of his reasons was a sense of futility in the endeavor: ‘I say,’ he wrote to John, ‘that at this point there is no necessity at all, not even for one canon, since no one observes the canons.’[570] The first question asked in the *Questions and Answers* of Jacob’s contemporary, Anastasios of Sinai, perhaps reflects confusion among the laity at sorting out where the truth stood among

[570] K.E. Rignell, *A Letter from Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite of Litarb* , Syriac text, p. 46: ܕܬܪܬܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܗ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܕܡܟܝܠ ܠܝܬ ܐܠܨܘܬܐ ܗܫܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܥܠ ܚܕ ܩܢܘܢܐ. ܟܕ ܠܝܬ ܐܢܫ ܕܢܛܪ ܩܢܘܢܐ. My translation, but see Rignell’s ET in *ibid*., p. 47.

competing claims to Orthodoxy in such a milieu. 'What,' the anonymous questioner asks, 'is the sign of the true and perfect Christian?'[571]

As for Jacob, he seems to have been extremely unhappy with the people over whom he had authority. During his first stint as bishop of Edessa, lasting four years, he is reported to have forbidden a number of priests from performing the liturgy and expelled many other people from the church because of their lawlessness, before finally giving up in the face of widespread disregard for the canons.[572] Jacob had burned the book of canon law for a reason. He was exasperated.

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[571] M. Richard and J.A. Munitiz, *Anastasii Sinaitae Quaestiones et Responsiones* (CSCG 59) (Turnhout, 2006), p. 5: Αʹ ΕΡΩΤΗΣΙΣ Τί ἐστι τὸ σημεῖον τοῦ ἀληθοῦς καὶ τελείου Χριστιανοῦ; ΑΠΟΚΡΙΣΙΣ Οἱ μέν φασιν ὅτι πίστις ὀρθὴ καὶ ἔργα εὐσεβείας, ὁ δὲ Χριστὸς οὐκ ἐν τούτοις ὁρίζεται τὸν ὄντως Χριστιανὸν ἀληθινόν· δύναται γάρ τις καὶ πίστιν καὶ ἔργα ἀγαθὰ ἔχειν καὶ ὑψηλοφρονεῖν ἐπ' αὐτοῖς καὶ μὴ εἶναι τέλειος Χριστιανός. Διό φησιν ὁ Κύριος, ὅτι Ὁ ἀγαπῶν με τὰς ἐντολάς μου τηρήσει, κἀγὼ ἀγαπήσω αὐτόν, καὶ ἐμφανίσω αὐτῷ ἐμαυτόν, καὶ ἐλευσόμεθα ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατήρ μου, καὶ μονὴν παρ' αὐτῷ ποιήσομεν. Οὐκοῦν διὰ τούτων μανθάνομεν, ὅτι διὰ μὲν τῆς πίστεως καὶ τῶν ἔργων τῶν καλῶν οἰκοδομεῖται ὁ οἶκος τῆς ψυχῆς ὑπὸ τοῦ νοὸς ἡμῶν· ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἔλθῃ καὶ οἰκήσῃ ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ οἰκοδεσπότης ἐν ἡμῖν, εὔδηλον ὡς οὐκ ἤρεσεν αὐτῷ τὸ ὑφ' ἡμῶν γενόμενον αὐτῷ οἰκοδόμημα. '1. Question: "What is the sign of the true and perfect Christian?" Answer 1: Some say right faith and works of piety, but Christ does not define being a true Christian by these things, for one can have faith and good works and be arrogant on account of these and not be a perfect Christian. Therefore Christ says, "The one who loves me will keep my commandments, and I will love him and will show Myself to him and My Father and I will come to him and will abide with him." Therefore, through these things we learn that through faith and good works the house of the soul is built by our mind. And if Christ, the master of the house, does not come and dwell in us, it is clear that the dwelling produced by us for Him has not pleased Him.' It is interesting to compare Anastasios' attitude towards faith and works with that of Jacob, cited above, in his treatise against those who transgress canon law. For Jacob, correct faith is not enough and must be accompanied by works. For Anastasios, however, correct faith and good works are not enough, but, following John 14:21-23, he adds that love must also be present. Peter Brown has pointed out to me that this same question has a long pedigree in Christian history which predates Anastasios and Jacob.

[572] J.-B. Chabot, ed. and trans., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, 1166-1199, (Paris, 1899-1910), IV 445 = II 471-472 (FT).

Chapter 5: A society in flux

In this chapter, my goal is to look at some of the corollaries of the chaotic situation we have just encountered. The confessional confusion that existed in the early medieval Middle East meant that there was a fierce battle on the ground between theological elites for the loyalty and adherence of ordinary Christians who were not firmly attached to any one confession. Another consequence of the competition for believers was a proliferation of schools throughout the Middle East. This will eventually take us to the most significant of all of these, the monastery of Qenneshre, which was the most important center for Greco-Arabic translation in the Syriac-speaking world of the sixth-to-ninth centuries.

There are two related suggestions I would like to make based on the evidence of interaction between different groups of society in Umayyad Syria that we have just been over. The first is the issue of boundaries. Jacob's canons governing Miaphysite interaction with other types of Christians can be seen as acts of border policing. He was trying to make sure that the integrity of the boundaries separating his community from others remained safe and intact. Alternatively, however, they can be viewed as attempts at actual border drawing. No one observes the canons, Jacob lamented—but had these canons ever been observed? Were these communities ever really separate in the first place? By the late seventh century, there were definitely monasteries and at least some groups of people which strongly advocated any number of Christological positions—Monothelete Chalcedonian, Dyothelete Chalcedonian, Miaphysite, Julianist, Nestorian and perhaps others. But the wide-ranging violations of the boundaries which were supposed to separate these communities suggest that for some Christians,

perhaps many, other considerations were more important in determining the shape of their lives than the subtler points of Christological doctrine. Furthermore, for Christians living in places with few or no clergy and worrying about receiving the mysteries, having a child baptized or making sure a loved one received a Christian burial, selecting a priest with the proper doctrinal orientation might not have been a real option. Beggars could not be choosers.

The evidence I have presented suggests that rather than being fully-formed and distinct communities, these different confessional movements were still very much trying to separate themselves from one another, not doctrinally but rather sociologically, as late as the Umayyad period. The problem was that life kept getting in the way.

My second suggestion relates to this first. The intertwined and overlapping nature of the lives of Christians of one confessional faction with Christians from another confessional faction meant that there were many opportunities in many different settings for friction to suddenly arise between people who perhaps notionally at least adhered to different positions even if those positions did not have a discernible effect on their interactions with other people on a day-to-day basis. Tectonic plates which rub against one another long enough will eventually produce earthquakes. Rival confessional groups rubbing up against one another produced earthquakes of a different kind. There might be violence, as happened after Athanasios Gamolo, the Miaphysite patriarch refused to give Herakleios communion at Mabbug at some point in late 629 or the early 630s. The Emperor became enraged and unleashed a

persecution upon the Miaphysites, in the course of which most of their churches and monasteries were seized by opposing groups.[573]

But violence was not the only form the heat from the friction between groups might take. Another form was disputations. This was a world in which theological debate, between Christians and between Christians and non-Christians, was part of everyday life. Already, in the fourth century, we find that Ephrem, when not engaged in manual labor, was 'constantly teaching pagans and showing them the way of truth;' we also meet him one day debating with a pagan.[574] John Barbur and Proba were two Miaphysites, trained in dialectics, who became Chalcedonians in the late sixth century after interacting with a Chalcedonian sophist named Stephen in Alexandria; after their conversion to dyophysitism, they held a discussion with the Miaphsyite monks of Antioch over Christological doctrine.[575] In the early seventh century, three members of the Church of the East traveled west to Syria on an embassy to Herakleios. Stopping nearApamea, they held a religious discussion with monks from a monastery of heretics—either Miaphysite or Chalcedonian. 'And when the sons of that monastery went forth to them, they marveled and were astonished at the arguments which these three brilliant stars brought against them, and they perceived that the stubble of their doctrine was not able [to resist] in the very smallest degree, the fire of the true wisdom and the powerful demonstrations of the men from the East.' Despite Thomas of

[573] J.-B. Chabot, ed., *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, 1166-1199, (Paris, 1899-1910), IV 410 = II 412 (FT). Michael reports that Herakleios wrote to his entire realm and ordered that all those who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon should have their nose and ears cut off and their homes plundered.

[574] See J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 1 (Rome, 1719), p. 33.

[575] See Michael the Syrian, vol. 2 (FT) pp. 363-364 = vol. 4 (Syriac), p. 381. For Proba and John Barbur as ܓܒܪ̈ܐ ܡܠܝ̈ܠܐ see vol. 2, p. 362 = vol. 4, p. 381. The discussion lasted six months. For a summary of the story of John Barbur and Proba, see, A. Grillmeier, et al., *Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche. Band 2/3: Die Kirchen von Jerusalem und Antiochien nach 451 bis 600* (Freiburg/Basel/Wien, 2002), p. 406-408.

Marga's description of the encounter, one of the three men, Sahdona, actually switched confessions as a result of the doctrinal dispute.[576] The so-called *Maronite Chronicle* reports that two Miaphysite Bishops came to Damascus in June of 659 and held a dispute on faith with representatives of the Maronites in the presence of Muʻāwiya; the Maronites are supposed to have bested the Miaphysites.[577] The *Trophies of Damascus* has a sizeable crowd of 'Jews, Greeks, Samaritans, heretics, and Christians' gather in a public place to watch a Jewish Christian-debate; we later learn that there were Saracens present as well.[578] At the religious discussion which took place between a Muslim Amīr and the Miaphysite Patriarch John, which may or may not have occurred in 639 or 644, there were present Muslim notables, urban notables, Christian Arab notables, Chalcedonian leaders and at least one Jew.[579]

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[576] For all of this, see E.A.W. Budge, trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 128-130. The translation is Budge's, p. 129. W.Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), pp. 170-171 contains a summary of these events and suggests that the heretical monastery was Miaphysite.

[577] E.-W. Brooks, ed., *Chronica Minora II* (CSCO: Series Tertia 4) (Paris, 1904), p. 70. For an ET, see A. Palmer, *The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), p. 30.

[578] See G. Bardy, ed., and trans., *Les trophées de Damas: controverse judéo-chrétienne du VII^e siècle*, (PO 15) (Paris, 1927), p. 215: Συνελθόντες δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ τὰ δόξαντα ἡμεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἰουδαίων οἱ πρόκριτοι,
συμπαρόντος καὶ πλήθους οὐκ ὀλίγου λαῶν, ἰουδαίων, ἑλλήνων, σαμαρειτῶν, αἱρετικῶν, χριστιανῶν, δημόσιος γὰρ ἦν καὶ μάλα ὁ τόπος ἐμφανέστατος and cf. also pp. 233-234: Ὡς γὰρ ὁρᾶτε, ἰδοὺ πάρεισι καὶ Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος, καὶ Σαρακηνῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι, καὶ Σαμαρειτῶν τινες, καὶ ἰουδαίων λαὸς, καὶ χριστιανῶν συνάθροισις, καὶ θεάτρον ἁπλῶς οὐ μικρόν. On the date of the *Trophies* ca. AD 680 see *ibid*., pp. 176-177. Also cf. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 85-86, who dates it to the mid-to-late seventh century.

[579] F. Nau, 'Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens,' *Journal asiatique* 11 (1915), pp. 251-252 (Syriac), pp. 260-262. For a date of AD 639, see See Nau, 'Un Colloque,' p. 227; for 644, see See H. Lammens, 'A propos d'un colloque entre le patriarche Jacobite Jean 1^er et 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣi,' *Journal asiatique* 11 (1919), p. 98. For this text as being a fictional construct from the early eighth century, see G.J. Reinink, 'The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam,' *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993), pp. 171-187. Though against Reinink, see more recently, H. Suermann, 'The Old Testament and the Jews in the dialogue between the Jacobite Patriarch John I and 'Umayr ibn Sa'd al-Anṣārī,' pp. 131-141, in *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, (Piscataway, NJ, 2007).

People were of course writing polemics as well: in the late sixth century, Barhadbshabba ‘Arbaya wrote ‘disputes with every religion and their refutation.’[580] And the line between holding actual disputes and writing polemics was a thin one and easily crossed: Gabriel ‘the Cow,’ a member of the Church of the East in the middle and later part of the seventh century, disputed with the monks of the Miaphysite monastery of Qartmin and responded to their polemics. Gabriel also held a dispute with the Nestorian apostate Sahdona in Edessa.[581] In addition to his writings against Monoenergism and Monotheletism (and his disputation with Pyrrhos), Maximos the Confessor (d. 662) wrote against Miaphysites.[582] The Chalcedonian Anastasios of the Sinai (d. ca. 700), an exact contemporary of Jacob of Edessa and George of the Arabs, lived in the Sinai but traveled frequently to Egypt and Syria to dispute with heretics. Beck called Anastasios’ Ὁδηγός ‘ein Handbuch zur Bekämpfung der Häresien’ and judged it one of the most important examples of later Chalcedonian polemics against Miaphysites. Anastasios also apparently wrote a now-lost work against Nestorians and two works against Jews.[583] John of Damascus, who was perhaps a generation younger than George of the Arabs, has left us two treatises against the Nestorians, three against

[580] See J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3.1 (Rome, 1725), ܐܟܬܒ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܣܝ̈ܡܬܐ ܒܬܠܬ ܦ̈ܠܓܘܢ: ܘܕܪ̈ܫܐ ܕܥܡ ܟܠ ܕܚܠܐ ܘܡܥܢܝܢܗܘܢ ‘He wrote a Book of Treasures in three parts and disputations with every religion and their refutation.’ On the question of the identity of Barḥadbshabba ‘Arbaya and Barḥadbshabba of Ḥulwān, see A. H. Becker, *Sources for the Study of the School of Nisibis* (Liverpool, 2008), pp. 11-16.

[581] For this, see E.A.W. Budge, trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 211-212. According to Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, pp. 180-181, Gabriel became Abbot of the monastery of Beth ‘Ābe at some point between 686 and 701.

[582] See H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur im Byzantinschen Reich* (Munich, 1959), pp. 438-439.

[583] For this information and the quote, see Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur*, pp. 442-443.

Miaphysites, one against the Monotheletes, and one, perhaps two, disputes with Manichaeans.[584]

Such formal disputes between members of rival Christian confessions or members of different religious communities tend to attract the attention of scholars in part because they were the sort of things that people left records of. They were, however, not the only game in town. Disputes or discussions between heavy-weight members of different groups were no more the only doctrinal contests going on than the Premiership is the only football that is played in the U.K. or the Major Leagues the only baseball played in the US. Bertrand Russell and Frederick Copelston's famous debate about the existence of God was only a higher-octane version of an untold number of similar debates and discussions that took place in lunchrooms, at water coolers, and in pubs and other places all throughout the twentieth century which were never published in books or placed on undergraduate syllabi. But they happened nevertheless. Similarly, the early medieval Near East of Jacob's day must have witnessed countless small-time religious discussions and disagreements which are now lost to us. The unseen pillars supporting the creation of dispute texts like the *Trophies of Damascus*, the dialogue between the Muslim Amīr and the Patriarch John and others were the interest of an audience which perhaps had been in their own, much less dramatic debates and discussions with friends, acquaintances and associates whom they differed with in terms of belief. At some time in the late eighth or early ninth century, the Chalcedonian Dyothelete Timothy of Kākhushtā learned the craft of woodworking in a monastery from Monothelete Maronites. Timothy, however, was

[584] See Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur*, pp. 477-478.

doing more than just learning a trade. 'As he worked,' Timothy's *Life* reports, 'the monks would gather about him. He did not restrain himself from informing them that just as Christ has two natures, so also he has two wills.' When the elders of the monastery saw what Timothy was up to, they disapproved, but the saint did not back down. 'Timothy began to exhort them from the Gospel and enlighten them from the divine and holy scriptures, adducing for them testimonials with manifest proofs. They, however, did not accept his teaching and would not even listen to his words, but their hearts became hard and their understanding became blind.'[585] In a world awash in different and competing Christian groups with overlapping and intertwined lives, such low-grade, small-time encounters would have been commonplace.

In other words, there must have been a whole layer, now almost entirely lost, of lower-level arguments, disputes, debates and doctrinal wrangling going on. All the points of overlap which I have spelled out above provided opportunities for potential exchanges of a religious or confessional nature. They were settings where people who at least notionally ascribed to conflicting creeds might assert some aspect of that creedal identity vis-à-vis a person whom they differed from in that respect.

How can we recover this layer? How do we find the batting averages and numbers of runs batted in for the minor league players of the seventh century? It is a difficult task, but not an impossible one and, at best, our evidence can only be fragmentary. The problem is the oral nature of these debates which were not recorded. Is there a way to conjure up the ghosts of conversations past?

[585] Translation J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala, in J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala edd. and trans., *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 48) (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 546 (Arabic), 547 (ET).

The Ghosts of Conversations Past

One way, perhaps, is through letters. If we view letters, at least some of them, as 'residues of conversations' we can, perhaps, find in them indications of the sort of confessional discussions I have been talking about.[586] And indeed, the letters of George, bishop of the Arab tribes (d. 724) provide precisely some of the residues we might expect if the confessional landscape of his day was anywhere nearly as muddled and chaotic as I have tried to suggest. The first three of George's eleven extant letters are about rather dry Christological polemic. At least three things about them, however, merit observation in the context of this discussion.

One is their style. They are written in a punchy, aporetic manner. The opponent is relentlessly presented with a series of dilemmas which methodically reduce his Christological position to one of hopeless absurdity. This is a style of Christological dispute which had appeared in the Near East within fifty years of Chalcedon and which became widespread in Greek and in Syriac.[587] Aporetic questions were weapons which were used by Chalcedonians, Miaphysites and Nestorians alike to wreak havoc on their opponents.[588] When Jacob labeled a Miaphysite scribe who wrote out questions and answers that helped Chalcedonian doctrine out a second Judas, he was quite probably referring to these sorts of aporetic questions. The earliest Islamic theology, when it appeared, would take this very distinctive aporetic form.[589]

[586] I owe the phrase 'residues of conversation' and this insight to John-Paul Ghobrial.

[587] For a bibliographic listing of examples of Greek Christological *aporiai* see A. Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition, II,1: From the Council of Chalcedon to Gregory the Great (590-604)*, (London, 1987), pp. 86-87.

[588] For examples of collections of aporetic questions in Syriac from different Christological perspectives, see M. Cook, 'The Origins of Kalām,' *BSOAS* 43.1 (1980), p. 38-40.

[589] M.A. Cook, 'The Origins of "Kalām,"' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1980), pp. 32-43 and see my 'Between Christology and Kalām? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the

The second point of interest about these letters is that sources for at least some of them are identifiable. A number of the questions George is responding to in his first letter and in the appendices to it can be shown to also exist in a variety of Greek and Syriac Chalcedonian sources, sometimes with conflicting attributions of authorship.[590] This suggests they were circulating widely throughout the Middle East. This perhaps is another indication of the popularity of this form of argumentation.

The third point of interest about these questions brings us back to the problem of 'the ghosts of conversations past.' These letters give us fleeting hints at precisely the sort of minor-league religious discussions I have just been speaking about. George's first letter is written to a certain Mar Mārī, who is the Abbot of the important monastery of Tell 'Ada. Mārī has sent George a set of 22 Chalcedonian aporetic questions asking for a response to them.[591] Written as an alphabetical acrostic, the document that Mārī sent George had no doubt been presented to either him or one of his monks by a Chalcedonian. Here we have the faint whiff of some sort of polemical

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Arab Tribes,' in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), pp. 671-716.

[590] See my 'Between Christology and Kalām? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes,' in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), pp. 688-702.

[591] BL Add., 12,154, fol. 222b,(1.1.2-1.1.3 in my edition): 'To the God-loving and God-fearing spiritual brother, honored in Christ, Mar Mari, head and leader of the great and holy monastery of the village of Tel 'Ada: [from] George, lowly in the Lord. Greetings. Concerning these heretical questions which you addressed to me, venerable Brother, and to which you urged me to make a counter-response, know well, O brother, that if a learned individual wishes to do this perfectly he will need countless lengthy words, words which will often induce fatigue in many at their reading. I, however, will be simple and try a second route, making a counter-argument to these absurd questions in a different manner and doing away with their absurdity through certain recondite questions, according to the teaching, that is, of our Savior Christ and of the venerable teachers of the Church. ܠܪܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܕܚܠ ܐܠܗܐ: ܐܚܐ ܪܘܚܢܐ ܘܡܝܩܪܐ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ: ܡܪܝ ܡܐܪܝ، ܪܫܐ ܘܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܕܬܠܥܕܐ ܩܪܝܬܐ. ܓܘܪܓܝ ܒܨ ܚܝ ܢܐܪܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܠܚܕܝܐ܀ ܡܛܠ ܫܘܐܠܐ ܗܪܛܝܩܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܘܫܛܬ ܠܝ ܐܚܘܬܟ ܡܝܩܪܬܐ: ܘܥܨܬܢܝ ܕܐܥܒܕ ܠܘܩܒܠܗܝܢ ܦܘܢܝ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܡܩܒܠܢܐ. ܥܕܝ ܕܒ ܐܘ ܐܚܘܢ. ܕܐܢܗܘ ܕܢܨܒܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܕܥܬܢܐ ܕܢܫܡܠܐ ܗܕܐ ܢܣܢܩ ܠܗ. ܠܡ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܡܡܠܠܐ ܘܐܪܝܟܬܐ ܡܠܐ. ܗܢܝܢ ܕܣܓܝܐ ܐܟܝܢ ܠܡܠܐܘܬܐ ܒܩܪܝܢܗܝܢ ܠܣܓܝܐܐ. ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܕܝܘܛܐ ܒܪ ܠܐܘܪܚܐ ܕܬܪܬܝܢ ܐܒܥܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ. ܒܦܘܢܝܐ ܕܫܘܐܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܪܝܪܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܬܠ ܐܚܪܬܐ. ܒܕ ܒܫܘܐܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܟܣܝܐ ܠܫܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܫܪܐ ܐܢܐ. ܐܝܟ ܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܕܝܢ: ܕܦܪܘܩܢ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܕܡܠܦܢܐ ܝܩܝܪܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ.

encounter; we also see that debate provided the opportunity to show one's virtuosity—a motive we should never underestimate when thinking about doctrinal clashes.[592]

In George's second letter, written to a deacon named Barhadbshabba, the smell of dispute becomes stronger. George begins his letter to Barhadbshabba by noting that an arrogant Chalcedonian 'from among those who are puffed up with worldly power' had asked a group of Miaphysite monks a question which they could not answer. When it became clear that the Miaphysites were stumped, the Chalcedonian pranced off proudly boasting about his victory over them. In writing to George for help with this question, Barhadbshabba was phoning a friend.[593] The entire incident of the arrogant Chalcedonian and the Miaphysite monks he confounded would have been completely lost had Barhadbshabba not written to George. This is precisely the sort of conversational echo of a large informal layer of dispute and discussion to which I have been referring.

George's third letter is really an excerpt from a longer letter written to a hermit named Joshua. What we have extant picks up where George begins to answer the questions of theological opponents. The cause for writing here again seems to be polemical pressure from some flavor of Dyophysite, another case of friction arising when opposing doctrinal systems rubbed up against one another. 'Concerning those

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[592] I am grateful to Peter Brown for this point.

[593] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 237b (5.1.2 in my edition). 'Because you have told me, O chaste one, God lover and God fearer, deacon Mar Barhadbshabba, that a certain Chalcedonian individual from among those who are puffed up with worldly power asked men in a [certain] place who had put on the modest monastic habit a certain little question, and when a response was not made as it should have been, he went away, babbling about these heretical boasts, you asked of me that when I had seen it, I should make a reply to that little question.' ܡܛܠ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܠܝ ܢܟܦܘܬܟ ܐܘ ܪܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܕܚܠ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܒܪܚܕܒܫܒܐ: ܕܓܒܪܐ ܚܕ ܟܠܩܕܘܢܝܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܫܬܠܛܢܐ ܥܠܡܝܐ ܢܦܝܚܝܢ: ܫܐܠ ܒܕܘܟ ܠܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܣܟܡܐ ܚܣܝܕܐ ܕܕܝܪܝܘܬܐ ܡܬܥܛܦܝܢ ܫܘܐܠܬܐ ܚܕ: ܘܟܕ ܠܐ ܐܬܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܙܕܩ ܗܘܐ: ܐܙܠ ܠܗ ܒܫܘܒܗܪ̈ܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܝܐ ܡܦܠܦܠ: ܘܒܥܝܬ ܡܢܝ ܕܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܚܙܝܬܗ ܠܝ: ܐܥܒܕ ܐܦ ܐܢܐ ܦܢܝ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܠܗܝ ܕܫܘܐܠܬܐ ܗܝ.

heretics who ask us, "Do you confess that the Word and His flesh have one substance or two?"' George writes, 'we must ourselves ask and respond to them like this…' and then George embarks on another aporetic dismantling of the opposition.[594] In the words of a (partially-preserved) letter written by Jacob of Edessa to the deacon Barhadbshabba, we can also hear the echoes of the heated discussions of the seventh and eighth-centuries: 'We will ask them,' Jacob repeats over and over, each time introducing a new problem in Chalcedonian theology.[595] Fragments of another letter of Jacob's, written to the

[594] BL. Add. 12,154, fols. 241b-242a (6.1.1-6.1.2 in my edition): '…a response to a certain other heretical question that was presented to him by the elder Mār Yeshū', a hermit who is in the village of Anab. After many things [written in the letter's] beginning. Concerning those heretics who ask us, 'Do you confess that the Word and his flesh have one substance or two?', we must ourselves ask and respond to them like this. 'Do you confess that the Word and his flesh have two substances, or one?' They will certainly respond that they confess two, it being known [they mean] a divine substance and a human substance. They are therefore questioned again like this: 'As for that divine substance which you confess Christ to have, do you say it is one hypostasis or three hypostases? Or is it a mere name? Similarly, concerning that human nature which you confess Christ to have—is it one hypostasis or many hypostases, or is it only a mere name?' ܦܢܝ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܠܫܘܐܠܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܗܪܛܝܩܝܐ ܕܐܬܩܪܒ ܠܗ. ܡܢ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܫܘܥ ܚܒܝܫܐ ܕܒܐܢܒ ܩܪܝܬܐ܀ ܒܬܪ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܫܘܪܝܐ܀ ܠܘܬ ܗܪܛܝܩܘ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܫܐܠܝܢ ܠܢ: ܕܐܝܢ ܠܡܠܬܐ ܘܠܒܣܪܗ ܚܕܐ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܐܘ ܬܪܬܝܢ. ܘܐܦ ܠܢ ܕܢܫܐܠ ܘܢܦܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܢܢ ܗܟܢܐ܀ ܕܐܝܢ ܗܟܢܐ. ܐܢܬܘܢ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܐܘܣܝܣ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܡܠܬܐ ܘܠܒܣܪܗ. ܐܘ ܚܕܐ. ܘܡܢ ܒܠܥܕܘܗܝ. ܬܪܬܝܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܚܬܝܬ. ܘܝܕܝܥܐ ܕܐܘܣܝܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ. ܘܐܘܣܝܐ ܐܢܫܝܬܐ+ ܡܟܝܠ ܢܫܬܐܠܘܢ ܬܘܒ ܗܟܢܐ+ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܗܝ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܕܝܬܘܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ: ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܐܘ ܬܠܬܐ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ. ܐܘ ܫܡܐ ܫܚܝܡܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܗܟܢܐ ܘܐܦ ܐܘܣܝܐ ܗܝ ܐܢܫܝܬܐ ܕܡܘܕܝܬܘܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ: ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܐܘ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ. ܐܘ ܫܡܐ ܫܚܝܡܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ܀

[595] See BL Add., 14,631, fols. 16a-16b. The text is lacunose and hard to make out in some places, but significant portions can still be read, most notably the constant refrain, 'let us ask them…' ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܪܒܥ ܡܛܝܢ ܐܢܝܢ ܠܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܪܬܝܢ. ܘܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܡܢܐ ܗܝ ܥܠܬܐ: ܕܗܠܝܢ ܟܕ ܐܫܟܚܘ ܕܢܬܚܝܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܠܗ [… ܘ]ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܕܗܘܬ ܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܟܝܢܝܬܐ ܘܩܢܘܡܝܬܐ […] ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܒܘܗܘܢ ܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ ܘܦܘܡܗܘܢ ܩܘܪ[ܝܠܠܘܣ؟] … ܬܘܒ ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܥܡܢ ܕܗܢܐ ܚܕ ܐܦܘܛܠܣܡܐ ܡܢܒܥܐ: ܒܚܕܝܘܬܐ ܘܒܪܘܟܒܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܘܡܢ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܗܘܝܬ. ܢܠܦ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܕ ܕܢܬܬܕܪܟܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘ ܚܕ ܐܦܘܛܠܣܡܐ: ܐܘ ܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܐ: ܐܘ ܬܪܝܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܡܐ. ܬܘܒ ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܥܡܢ ܠܗ ܠܗܘ ܚܕ ܐܦܘܛܠܣܡ[ܐ ܡ]ܢܒܥܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܬܠܬ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܗܘ ܗܘ ܕܡܢ ܡܕܡܗܘ, ܚܕ ܒܢܝܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܦܪܨܘܦܐ ܡܬܒܥܐ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܕ ܕܢܬܐܡܪ …[ܬܘܒ] ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܡܠܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܢܫܡܐ ܡܫܝܚܐ: ܚܕ ܒܢܝܐ ܡܬܩܪܐ: ܚܕ ܩܢܘܡܐ ܡܬܩܪܐ: ܚܕ [ܦܪܨܘܦܐ] ܡܬܩܪܐ: ܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܕ ܕܐܬܡܪܘܢܝܗܘܢ, ܬܪܝܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕ[ܐܡܪܝܢ…]…ܬܘܒ ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܥܡܢ ܕܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܟܢ[ܬܐ]…ܬܘܒ ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܥܡܢ…ܠܐ ܡܢ ܡ ܕܐܬܡܪܘܢܝܗܘܢ, ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܒܢܝ̈ܢ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ. ܬܘܒ ܢܫܐܠ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܐܢ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܡܪܘܢ ܥܡܢ: ܕܗܘ ܗܘ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܡܢ ܡܪܝܡ… 'We will ask them, therefore, whether four came to the union and not two. Again, we will ask them what is the cause that these things have been able to be made alive, things which do not … [Again] we will ask them if they confess that the union was natural and hypostatic … as their father Athanasios and their mouth Cyril affirm … Again we will ask them if they confess with us that this one product (ἀποτέλεσμα) [of the union]

Chalcedonians of Harran, suggest that Jacob, like George, was very aware of the Chalcedonian theological challenge.[596]

I have not yet mentioned Armenians, but they also come in for harsh treatment at the hands of Jacob, who accuses them of keeping Jewish observances, having Julianists and Jews as teachers, agreeing with Chalcedonians in some practices, with

is composite in the union and in the composition composition from divinity and humanity—how, if they confess this? We will teach them that it is not possible to confess of Christ who is one product (ἀποτέλεσμα) [of the union] either two natures or two persons. Again, we will ask them if they confess with us that one composite product (ἀποτέλεσμα) [of the union], how is it that the union requires that it is impossible to be said of that which comes before it one nature which is simple and compound person? [Again], we will ask them if they affirm of the Word of God, Jesus Christ, one incarnate nature and one incarnate hypostasis and one incarnate Person, it is not possible for them to affirm two natures as they do...Again, we will ask them, if they confess with us the confession of the Fathers ... Again, we will ask them, if they confess with us ... it not possible for them to affirm two natures in Christ. Again, we will ask them if they are persuaded to affirm with us that the Son of Man who came down from heaven...'

[596] The two fragments are preserved in Syriac with a Karshūnī translation in a Karshūnī treatise written by the Patriarch Makīkha, in Cambridge Add. 2889, fols. 272b-273b. These fragments do not contain a sharply polemical edge. The first one, fols. 272b-273a, is about Christ's humanity coming down from heaven: ܦܨ̰ܠ ܠܡܐ ܩܐܠܗ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܠܪܗܐܘܝ ܐܠܝܥܩܘܒܝ ܒܐܠܪܐܝ ܦܝ ܪܣܐܠܬܗ ܐܠܝ ܐܠܡܠܟܝܗ ܐܠܣܐܟܢܝܢ ܒܡܕܝܢܗ ܚܪܐܢ. ܦܐ ܐܢ ܐܠܢܐܣܘܬ ܐܠܡܣܝܚ ܢܙܠ ܡܢ ܐܠܣܡܐ܀ ܩܐܠ 'A section from what Jacob of Edessa, the Jacobite, held by way of opinion in his letter to the Melkites who reside in the city of Harran, that the humanity of Christ came down from heaven. He said...' The second fragment, fol. 273a-273b, deals with predicating death to God and has a bit more punch to it. ܦܨ̰ܠ ܡܢ ܩܘܠ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܠܪܗܐܘܝ، ܐܠܡܕܟܘܪ ܦܝ ܪܣܐܠܬܗ ܐܠܡܕܟܘܪܗ. ܝܚܘܝ ܡܢ ܡܐ ܩܐܠܗ ܐܠܝܗ ܦܝ ܐܢܚܐܠܗ ܐܠܡܘܬ ܥܠܝ ܐܠܠܗ ܐܠܬܥܐܠܝ ܬܡܓ̰ܕ ܗܘ܀ ܩܐܠ: ܗܕܐ ܗܝ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܫܠܝܚܝܬܐ. ܗܕܐ ܗܝ ܝܪܬܘܬܐ ܐܠܗܝܬܐ. ܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܦܘܠܘܣ. ܕܚܕ ܗܘ ܡܪܝܐ ܘܚܕܐ ܗܝ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܚܕܐ ܗܝ ܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ. ܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܡܘܕܝܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܐܬܒܪܢܫ ܐܠܗܐ. ܘܥܡ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܡܟܪܙܐ. ܚܕ ܗܘ ܡܪܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܝܬ ܚܠܦܝܢ ܘܦܪܩ ܠܢ. ܘܠܐ ܐܡܪܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܟܦܪܝܢ ܒܦܘܪܩܢܢ. ܕܐܦܫܪ ܠܚܕ ܡܢ ܕܢܡܘܬ ܘܠܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܥܒܪ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܣܠܝܢ ܠܡܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܚܠܦܝܢ. ܠܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܣܒܝܢ ܠܦܘܪܩܢܢ. ܘܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܪܝܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ. ܘܠܐ ܡܪܓܫܝܢ ܕܣܪܝܩ ܗܘ ܦܘܪܩܢܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܩܒܠ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܛܘܒܐ ܘܐܬܩܪܝ ܟܐܦܐ܀ 'An excerpt—from the aforementioned discourse of Jacob of Edessa, in the aforementioned letter—which contains what he held concerning ascribing death to God Most High, may he be glorified. He said: "This is the apostolic faith. This is the divine inheritance. It is concerning this that Paul says, 'There is one Lord and one Faith and one Baptism.' It is concerning this that the Church confesses that God became human,' and with the Apostle, proclaims, 'The Lord who died for us and delivered us is one,' and it does not say, like those who deny our salvation, 'It was possible for one to die but for the other not to pass away [sc. with respect to the humanity and divinity of Christ],' those who reject the death of God on our behalf while ascribing to a human our salvation. Another Lord is made by them who is a human being and they do not realize that the saving action of a human is empty. It was on account of this faith [sc. which the Church has and proclaims], that Simon received the blessing and was called 'Peter.'" A Syriac version of this complete text was apparently contained in the now-destroyed collection of mss at the Monastery of Seert. See the entry for MS Seert Syriac 69 (no. 12) in A. Scher, *Catalogue des manuscrits syriaques et arabes conservés dans la bibliothèque épiscopale de Séert (Kurdistan)* (Mosul, 1905), p. 53.

Nestorians in others, and with Arabs in still others.[597] They, too, were part of the confessional kaleidoscope of the seventh and early eighth centuries and they, too, were

[597] See Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, pp. 3-4. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܐܡܪ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܪܡܢܝܐ. ܕܐܝܬ ܚܝܠܐ ܒܥܘܩܒܪܐ ܕܢܛܢܦܐ ܠܡܕܡ. ܟܡܐ ܥܘܩܒܪܐ ܐܬܛܒܥܘ ܒܛܘܦܢܐ ܪܒܐ. ܘܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܘܒܥܝܪܐ. ܘܥܠ ܡܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ ܥܕܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܦܫܬ ܚܕܐ ܦܪܕܬܐ ܕܥܦܪܐ ܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܚܠܛܬ ܒܛܢܦܘܬܐ. ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܡܝܐ ܬܚܬܝܐ. ܗܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܠܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐܪܡܢܝܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܕܟܐ. ܬܘܒ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܠܟ. ܕܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܕܕܚܠ ܡܢ ܛܢܦܘܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܠܝܬ ܒܗ ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܡܬܛܢܦܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܢ ܓܪܡܐ ܕܡܝܬܐ ܘܡܢ ܥܠܠܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܐܬܛܢܦܘ ܒܢܡܘܣܐ. ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܡܬܛܢܦ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܥܘܩܒܪܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܝܢ. ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܚܛܝܬܐ. ܘܐܣܘܛܘܬܐ ܘܪܘܝܘܬܐ ܘܥܒܪ ܢܡܘܣܐ. ܕܗܘܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܬܝܒܘܬܐ. ܐܝܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܪܘܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܐܢܝܢ ܕܡܛܢܦܢ ܠܟܠ ܡܕܡ. ܗܘ ܕܐܠܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܠܐܪܡܢܝܐ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܓܢܣܗ. ܘܗܐ ܐܪܡܢܝܐ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܝܗܘܕܝܬܐ. ܘܡܢ ܙܢܝܘܬܐ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܪܚܡܬܗ ܘܛܢܦܘܬܐ ܡܪܓܙܢܝܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܛܠܬܗ ܒܠܥܬ ܒܡܝܐ ܕܛܘܦܢܐ ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܠܐ ܥܪܩܝܢ ܐܪܡܢܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܓܐܪܝܢ ܘܓܢܒܝܢ ܘܡܒܣܝܢ ܘܥܒܕܝܢ ܘܫܪܟܐ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܦܪܝܫܢ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ. ܘܫܦܪܝܢ ܘܡܫܘܝܢ ܠܐܟܠܩܪܨܐ ܘܠܫܐܕܐ. ܘܕܒܝܫܐ ܡܢ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܡܛܢܦܝܢ ܠܒܪܝܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܡܟܕܒܝܢ ܠܗ ܟܕ ܐܡܪ. ܟܕ ܗܘ ܐܡܪ ܒܦܘܡܗ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܐܬܒܪܝ ܡܕܡ ܕܛܢܦܐ. ܘܠܝܬ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܛܢܦ ܠܒܪܢܫܐ. ܐܢ ܒܬܘܕܝܬܐ ܡܬܐܟܠ. ܬܘܒ ܗܘ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܥܡܐ ܕܐܪܡܢܝܐ ܡܢ ܪܫܝܬܗ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܡܘܣ ܚܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܢܦܩܘ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܠܐ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܣܦܩܬܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܝ ܕܐܫܬܠܛܘ ܒܗܘܢ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܢܘܟܪܝܐ ܘܦܪܫܘ ܡܢ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ. ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܡܠܦܢܝܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܦܢܛܣܝܣܛܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܫܠܡܝܢ ܠܝܗܘܕܝܐ. ܒܗܝ ܕܡܩܪܒܝܢ ܐܡܪܐ ܘܦܛܝܪܐ. ܘܚܡܪܐ ܚܝܐ. ܘܡܒܪܟܝܢ ܡܠܚܐ. ܘܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܕܒܝܫܢ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܠܡܝܢ ܠܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܘܠܟܠܩܕܘܢܝܐ ܫܠܡܝܢ. ܒܗܝ ܕܪܫܡܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܨܠܝܒܐ. ܘܠܝܘܠܝܢܝܣܛܐ ܫܠܡܝܢ ܒܗܝ ܕܡܚܫܢ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܡܚܫܢܐ ܡܢ ܢܦܫܗ ܠܡܚܫܢ. ܘܠܛܝܛܢܐ ܫܠܡܝܢ ܒܗܝ ܕܫܡܫܝܢ ܬܠܬ ܒܡܕܒܚܐ ܠܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܡܫܦܪܝܢ ܘܒܚܡܪܐ. ܘܠܐܦܬܪܐ ܫܠܡܝܢ. ܒܗܝ ܕܡܚܠܛܝܢ ܗ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܫܟܢܬ ܡܫܬܝܐ ܕܚܡܪܐ ܚܠܗ ܕܝܢܐ. ܘܒܗܘܢܐ ܢܛܪܐܝܬ ܓܪ ܚܙܝܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܠܗ ܠܪܘܫܠܡܐ ܥܠ ܟܠܗ ܕܥܒܘܕ ܕܢܫܐ ܥܠ ܡܫܬܝܐ ܒܦܘܡ ܦܘܬܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܗܘܐ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܢܦܫܐ ܗܢ ܘܥܘܕܐ ܗܘ ܒܣܪܪܐ ܘܡܘܒܕܐ ܠܥܒܕܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. 'Jacob of Edessa says: If it is like the Armenians say—"There is a power in mice to make a thing impure"—then how many mice drowned in the great flood, and humans and cattle? And inasmuch as [the flood] was upon the earth to the point that not one grain of dust remained on the earth which was not mixed with the impurity—up to the lower waters—look now, the Armenians have nothing which is clean. Again, I will say to you: everything which fears impurity does not have in it the Holy Spirit, like the Jews who were made impure by the bones of a dead person and by other causes which are called impure in the Law. Everybody who says that a person is made unclean by mice or by something else, apart from sin and licentiousness and drunkenness, and transgressing the law which happen without repentance does not have the Holy Spirit in him. For these are Jewish observances which pollute each thing. The one who taught these things to the Armenians was a Jew by race and look—the Armenians keep Jewish observances. But as for fornication, which is its friend and an impurity which provokes God—since on account of it, it was swallowed up in the waters of the flood—from this the Armenians do not flee. Instead, they commit adultery, and steal, and despise, and [do] other things without number which are separated from God, and they are pleasing to and united with the Accuser and with demons. What is more evil than all the things which make the creation of God impure is that they make Him a liar when He says with His holy mouth that something which is impure has not been created and that there is nothing that defiles a human if it is eaten in gratitude (cf. 1 Timothy 4:3-4). *And again, Mar Jacob*: As for the Armenian people, they have lived without a law since the beginning of the world. No teachers or monks have come out from among them and there is no one who has sufficient knowledge. Because of the fact that strange teachers have come to have authority among them, they have separated from the true faith. Some of their teachers were from among the Jews and some of them from among the Phantasiasts and for this reason, they agree with the Jews in that they offer up a lamb and unleavened bread, and pure wine, and they bless salt and in the case of other things which are more wicked than these they agree with the Jews. And they agree with the Chalcedonians in that they make the sign of the

participants in the low-level disagreements I have been speaking of. In his fourth letter, George takes up the issue of whether one should pour water into the cup at the Eucharist. A 'certain Armenian' had been demanding of Joshua the recluse that he prove from the Gospel that there had been water in the cup at the Last Supper. This is another ghost of a conversation past.[598] Averil Cameron has noted the increase in

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cross with two [fingers]. They agree with the Nestorians in that they cross from right to left with the whole hand. With the Arabs they agree in that they prostrate three times to the south when they make a sacrifice or circumcise. They resemble the pagans in that when a dead person dies, they most definitely make a sacrifice for him. But this they especially anger God, because it is completely unlawful for a Christian to offer a sacrifice for a dead person on the day he dies, for this is in reality a pagan law and a Jewish law and foreign to the Church of God.' GT by Kayser in *ibid*., pp. 34-35. See the Armenian canons of David of Ganjak on the pollution caused by a mouse which falls into salt, flour, is found in a stove or on utensils, and other things in C.J.F. Dowsett, trans., *The Penitential of David of Ganjak* (CSCO 217: SA 4) (Louvain, 1961), pp. 8-10 (I am grateful to Peter Brown for this reference). Also, compare Jacob's criticisms of Armenian practices with those stated by Theodore Abū Qurrah in J.C. Lamoreaux, 'An Unedited Tract Against the Armenians by Theodore Abū Qurrah,' *Le Muséon* 105 (1992), pp. 327-341: (on mixing wine and water in communion): pp. 335, 337; (on animal sacrifice): pp. 337-341. The Thirty-Second Canon of the Quinisext Council also criticized the Armenian practice of using pure, or unmixed, wine in the Eucharist, see H.R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees*, vol. 14 of P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series* (New York, 1900), pp. 379-380.

[598] See BL Add., 12,154, fol. 257a (7.6.13-7.6.15 in my edition): Now, since a certain Armenian was demanding of you, as you wrote, that you prove for him from the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) that there was water in that cup Our Lord gave to his disciples, or that we should pour water into that cup, let it be demanded of him that he prove from the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) that there was no water in that cup or that we should not put water into the cup of Mysteries. But perhaps he will say that it is written in the Gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) that Our Lord said to his disciples, 'Truly, truly, I say unto you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine until I drink it anew with you in the Kingdom of God.' And it is claimed that based on the fact that He said, 'the fruit of the vine,' it is that [the wine] of that cup was pure wine and not mixed with water. But let us listen one more time. What now? Now, in the Kingdom of God—that is, in the time after His Resurrection—when Our Savior was eating and drinking with his disciples (in accordance with the divine plan, in order to confirm his Resurrection) and when He remained with them 40 days, as it is written, was he drinking unmixed (ἄκρατον) wine each time He and His disciples were eating and drinking? Who is so brainless so as to speak in this way, save the person who claims that that cup Our Lord took and gave thanks and said a blessing over and had His disciples drink from had no wine in it but only water? But if a person wanted to properly refute this reprehensible doctrine, he would need many words and even his own treatise.' ܘܡܛܠ ܕܬܒܥ ܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܐܪܡܢܝܐ ܐܢܫ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܬ: ܕܬܚܘܐ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ: ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܡܝܐ ܒܟܣܐ ܗܘ ܕܝܗܒ ܡܪܢ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ: ܐܘ ܕܢܙܪܘܩ ܠܡܙܘܓܗ ܣܡ ܡܝܐ ܒܟܣܐ ܗܘ. ܢܬܬܒܥ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܠܡܚܘܝܘ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ. ܕܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܡܝܐ ܒܟܣܐ ܗܘ. ܐܘ ܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܢ ܕܢܪܡܐ ܠܡܙܓܘ ܐܠܐ ܟܒܪ ܐܡܪ. ܕܟܬܝܒ ܒܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܐܡܪ ܡܪܢ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ.. ܕܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܐܡܪ ܡܝܐ ܒܟܣܐ ܕܐܪܙܐ. ܐܢܐ ܠܟܘܢ. ܕܠܐ ܐܫܬܐ ܐܫܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܐ ܝܠܕܐ ܕܓܦܬܐ. ܥܕܡܐ ܕܐܫܬܝܘܗܝ ܚܕܬܐ ܥܡܟܘܢ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܠܡ ܕܐܡܪ ܝܠܕܐ ܕ ܓܦܬܐ ܡܬܚܒܐ. ܕܚܡܪܐ ܚܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܗܘܐ ܕܗܘ ܟܣܐ. ܘܠܘ ܚܡܪܐ ܕܡܙܝܓ ܒܡܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܢܫܡܥ ܟܝ ܬܘܒ. ܡܢܐ ܗܫܐ. ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܐܘ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܕܒܬܪ ܩܝܡܬܗ: ܟܕ ܐܟܠ ܗܘܐ ܘܫܬܐ ܗܘ ܦܪܘܩܢ ܥܡ ܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ, ܡܛܠ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܢܫܪܪ ܩܝܡܬܗ: ܟܕ ܟܬܪ ܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܘܡܬܬܠܐ ܡ ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܟܬܝܒ: ܚܡܪܐ ܐܩܪܛܘܢ ܫܬܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܘܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ, ܟܠ ܐܡܬܝ, ܕܐܟܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܘܫܬܝܢ. ܘܡܢܘ ܕܗܟܢܐ ܣܟܠ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗܕܐ ܢܐܡܪ. ܐܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܟܣܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܣܒ ܡܪܢ ܘܐܘܕܝ, ܘܒܪܟ ܥܠܘܗܝ, ܘܐܫܩܝܗ

Christian literature aimed at Jews in the seventh century.[599] And of course, we have traces of polemical conversations held with pagans and Muslims, too. Disagreement and dispute over religious matters did not stop at the boundaries of the Christian faith. A manuscript in the British Library, for example, preserves a set of aporetic questions for Christians to use against pagans—worshippers of the sun.[600]

Letters can show other religious disputes and discussions of a slightly less doctrinal flavor which were taking place. A thirteenth-century manuscript in Cambridge preserves the only surviving work of a Miaphysite bishop named Yonan who had been a correspondent of the famous Severos Sebokht in the middle of the seventh century. Yonan was responding to a periodeute named Theodore who had written him seeking arguments supporting monogamy. Theodore, it seems, had been put on the defensive by people who thought it acceptable for a man to take more than one wife. 'Now, when on account of a certain exchange,' Yonan wrote to Theodore,

> which took place between you and some people, as you stated, the cause arose [and] you were interested in learning which arguments we should require of those who are badgering (that is, demanding), 'On what basis do you prove that it is not right for a man to marry two women at the same time?'[601]

ܡܢܗ ܬܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ. ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܣܒܪܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܐܠܐ ܐܚܝܕܘ ܕܚܝ ܒܗ ܐܚܪ ܕܐܡܪ ܡܢܗ ܕܪܕܦ ܢܥܪܗ ܠܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܒܪܫܠܬܐ. ܘܠܗܠܝܢ ܐܣܬܪܗܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܕܗܦܟܬ ܡܢ ܠܒܐ. ܒܠ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܡܫ̈ܬܐܠܬܐ ܚܘܝܢ ܘܒܠ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܫܝܢܬܐ. NB: George's exact contemporary, the Armenian Catholicos Yovhannēs Awjnec'i (718-729) who wrote a number of treatises against heretics, composed a text on leaven and water in the liturgy. See R.W. Thomson, *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD* (Turnhout, 1995), p. 218.

[599] See, e.g., her 'Interfaith Relations in the First Islamic Century,' *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies* 1:2 (1999), pp. 4-5.

[600] See BL Add. 14,533, fols. 138b-139a. I have transcribed these questions but will not reproduce them here. Cf. also M. Cook, 'The Origins of "*Kalām*",' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1980), p. 38.

[601] Cambridge Add. 2023, fol. 254b: ܐܡܬܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܚܘܠܦܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܗܘܐ ܠܟ ܠܘܬ ܐ̈ܢܫܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܥܠܬ ܥܠܬܐ: ܡܬܚܦܛܬ ܗܘܝܬ ܠܡܐܠܦ. ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܒܥ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܥܠܝܢ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܡܬܒܥܝܢ: ܕܡܢ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܟܘܢ ܠܡ ܕܬܚܘܘܢ: ܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܠܡܣܒ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܢܫ̈ܝܢ ܐܟܚܕܐ. On Yonan, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 259.

Although Yonan goes on to assert that one could make an argument for monogamy even if the Divine Scripture and the Venerable Fathers had never spoken on the issue, Yonan's use of church fathers such as Gregory Nazianzen and John Chrysostom and his explicitly Christian argumentation suggest that Theodore was dealing with a group of people in the mid-seventh century who believed that polygamy was compatible with Christianity.[602] The canons of Jacob of Edessa seem to confirm this, as well. 'It is not right,' Jacob wrote, 'for a Christian man to marry two women at the same time, just as it is not possible for a Christian woman to marry two men at the same time. For Christ does not possess two churches, nor does the Church possess two Christs.'[603] In the middle of the eighth century in northern Mesopotamia, the East Syrian Māran'ameh correctly predicted that God would punish a Christian man with death for having more than one wife.[604]

31 Flavors

Our knowledge of the spectrum of possible Christian beliefs in this period is obscured by the documents which survive, and the letter of Yonan suggests that the confessional chaos I have tried to delineate in this chapter was only one front in a wide-ranging battle to enforce orthodoxy and orthopraxy that church leaders like Jacob were constantly fighting. Addai's questions to Jacob reflect a host of activities among Christians which Jacob was less than happy with. Some Christians were bending

[602] See Cambridge Add. 2023, fols. 256b, 257b for citations of John Chrysostom; fol. 256a for a citation of Gregory Nazianzen. On fol. 256b, Yonan makes the argument that if there are two Christs then there are two men/husbands and two women/wives. But if Christ is one and the head of the Church is one and the flesh is one, that of two is rejected.

[603] Mardin 310, fol. 211b: ܠܐ ܘܙܐ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܒܪ[ܢܫ]ܐ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܐܢܬ̈ܬܐ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܐܟܚܕܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦܠܐ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܡܨܝܐ ܠܗ ܠܡܣܒ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܓܒܪ̈ܝܢ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܩܢܐ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܡܫܝ̈ܚܐ܀

[604] See E.A.W. Budge, trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 308.

needles so that their tip passed through their eye and fastening locks and throwing these things in wells or burying them in the ground in order to keep a husband and wife apart from one another.[605] In order to protect their property from sickness, people would use the dung of bulls to make the walls of their houses.[606] When confronted with illness, Addai listed a large number of remedies people were using: they sought refuge in special trees, springs, sea water, bones, dried animal heads, nerium oleander and other herbs, iron and gold. They were investing thunder, lighting and comets with meaning and power. Some even would use the right paw of a wolf or pieces of broken pottery for apotropaic purposes. Special names or words or utterances were also put to use. Jacob, for his part, spoke of people who would put laurel branches in a field to keep its crops from getting scorched by heat.[607] A locust infestation in a garden might

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[605] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 140: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܦܝܢ ܡܚܛܐ ܘܥܒܪܝܢ ܪܝܫܗ ܒܡܚܙܝܬܗ. ܘܡܛܠܩܝܢ ܩܘܦܠܐ ܘܫܕܝܢ ܠܗܝܢ ܒܒܐܪܐ ܥܡܝܩܬܐ ܐܘ ܛܡܪܝܢ ܠܗܝܢ ܒܓܘ ܐܪܥܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܢܦܪܫܘܢ [ܢܬܦܪܫܘܢ] ܓܒܪܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܬܬܗ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܡܬܝܕܥܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܚܪܫܐ ܘܩܛܘܠܐ ܗܢܘ ܕܢܬܚܪܡܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܚܪܫܘ ܓܝܪ ܐܦ ܩܛܠܘ܀ 'Addai: Concerning those who bend a needle and put its tip through its eye and they fasten locks and throw them into a deep well or bury them in the earth, in order to keep a husband from his wife. Jacob: Those who do such things should be rejected from the Church while being made known as sorcerers and murderers, for they have practiced enchantments and also killed.' (LT, p. 141.)

[606] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 140: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܓܘܣܝܢ ܒܟܘܒܠܐ ܕܬܘܪܐ ܘܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܫܘܪܐ ܠܒܬܝܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܘܦܘܨܝ ܠܗ ܕܩܢܝܢܝܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܟܘܪܗܢܐ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܥܡ ܦܠܚܝ̈ ܠܛܡܐܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ 'Addai: Concerning those who take refuge in the dung of bulls and make it into walls for their houses for the protection and deliverance of their belongings from sickness. Jacob: Such people are with the worshippers of impurity.'

[607] Lamy, Dissertatio, pp. 140, 142: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܥܠܝܢ ܠܟܘܟܒܐ ܥܠ ܟܘܪܗܢܝܗܘܢ. ܐܘ ܡܛܠ ܓܘܣܝܢ ܒܐܝܠܢܐ ܝܚܝܕܝܐ. ܐܘ ܒܡܒܘܥܐ ܕܡܝܐ ܐܘ ܒܫܒܥܐ ܡܒܘܥܐ. ܐܘ ܒܡܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܝܡܐ. ܐܘ ܒܓܪܡܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܣܝܬܐ. ܐܘ ܒܪܝܫܐ ܝܒܝܫܐ ܕܒܥܝܪܐ. ܐܘ ܒܪܘܕܘܕܐܦܢܐ. ܐܘ ܒܥܩܪܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܪܥܐ. ܐܘ ܒܦܪܙܠܐ. ܐܘ ܒܕܗܒܐ. ܐܘ ܡܝܩܪܝܢ ܠܪܥܡܐ ܐܘ ܠܒܪܩܐ ܐܘ ܠܢܘܪܐ ܕܦܪܚܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ. ܐܘ ܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܘܡܝܩܪܝܢ ܠܝܡܝܢܐ ܕܕܐܒܐ. ܐܘ ܠܦܣܩܐ ܕܚܨܦܬܐ. ܐܘ ܠܐܫܡܗܬܐ ܥܒܝܕܬܐ ܐܘ ܒܡܠܬܐ. ܘܟܕ ܗܠܝܢ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܘܡܩܒܠܝܢ ܠܟܠܗ ܘܠܓܫܡܐ ܘܠܢܦܫܐ ܩܠܝܠ. ܘܡܬܚܙܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܕܗܘܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܠܝܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܐܡܪܬ: ܘܕܡܝܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܩܠܝܢ ܕܕܚܫܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܓܘ ܣܩܠܬܐ ܕܕܪܐ ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܦܩܘܢ ܕܪܐ: ܒܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܓܒܝ ܐܦܘܠܘ ܕܡܫܝܚܘܬܐ ܒܥܡܡܐ ܘܒܢܒܝܐ ܘܒܟܪܙܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ، ܕܡܫܒܚ ܕܪܐ ܐܘ ܡܦܩܝܢ. ܕܠܐ ܠܗܬܪܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܘܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܠܦܘܠܚܢܐ: ܘܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܦܛܘܬܐ ܕܒܬܪܐ܀ 'Addai: Concerning those who blame the stars for their illnesses: they either seek refuge in a solitary tree, or in a spring of water or in seven springs, or in water from the sea, or in a bone from a wall, or in the dried head of an animal, or in nerium oleander (ῥοδοδάφνη), or in other plants from the earth, or in iron or gold, or they give honor to thunder claps and flashes of lightning or fire that flies in the sky, or they hold on to and honor the right

be met with several strategies. People would place a coin in a stream of water and then use it to irrigate a garden with the purpose of driving out locusts and other pests who were destroying it.[608] Another option was a ritual which Jacob decried as pagan: young virgins were gathered together. One was picked out and was designated the mother of one of the locusts. Weeping intensely for the chosen locust, they would bury it and then take its 'mother' to the mass of other locusts. As with the coin in the stream of water, the intent was to get the pests to leave the garden. The men and women, Jacob wrote, who engaged in this pagan act, were to receive punishment based on ecclesiastical canons.[609]

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paw of a wolf, or a broken pot, or other base and despicable things, and along with these things, they observe and attribute divine power to words and names and utterances and many other things which resemble them. Jacob: As regards all these things which you have listed—and along with them, those who place laurel (δαφνίδιον) branches in fields of grain so that the grain does not get scorched from heat, though God, who said to the children of Israel, "I have struck you with heat and scorching wind and hail,"(Amos 4:9) is the One who causes grain to wither or grow fat: they are worshippers of idols and servants of created things, and strangers from the communion of the church.' LT, pp. 141, 143.

[608] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 140: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܣܡ ܕܝܢܪܐ ܒܡܥܝܢܐ ܕܡܝܐ ܘܐܫܩܝ ܓܢܬܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܢܛܪܘܕ ܡܢܗ ܩܡܨܐ ܘܪܚܫܐ ܕܡܚܒܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܢܐ ܕܫܚܠܦ ܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܐ ܘܒܪܘܝܐ: ܒܕܡܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ ܡܬܚܒܠܢܐ ܘܕܚܠ ܘܦܠܚ ܠܒܪܝܬܐ. ܥܡ ܕܚܠܝ ܦܬܟܪܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܡܢܐ܀ 'Addai: Concerning one who has placed a denarius in a stream of water and irrigated a garden in order to drive out from it locusts and reptiles which were destroying it. Jacob: Such a one has changed the glory of God who is incorruptible and creator for the image of a corruptible human (cf. Romans 1:23) and fears and serves created things: he should be numbered among those who worship idols.'

[609] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 142, 144: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܟܕ ܥܐܠ ܩܡܨܐ ܠܓܢܬܐ ܐܘ ܠܕܪܥܐ. ܡܟܢܫܝܢ ܠܒܬܘܠܬܐ ܥܠܝܡܬܐ ܘܢܣܒܝܢ ܚܕ ܩܡܨܐ ܘܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܛܠܝܬܐ ܐܡܐ ܘܒܟܝܢ ܠܗ ܘܩܒܪܝܢ ܠܗ: ܘܡܘܒܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܐܡܐ ܗܝ, ܠܘܬ ܗܘ ܟܢܫܐ ܗܘ ܕܩܡܨܐ ܟܕ ܡܒܝܐܝܢ ܠܗ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܦܩܘܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܩܡܨܐ ܡܢ ܓܢܬܐ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܘܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ ܘܗܢܘܢ ܓܒܪܐ ܘܢܫܐ ܕܚܦܛܘ ܕܬܫܬܡܠܐ ܗܕܐ ܡܢܬܐ ܕܚܢܦܘܬܐ ܢܩܒܠܘܢ ܦܘܪܥܢܐ ܡܢ ܩܢܘܢܐ܀ 'Addai: Concerning those who, when locusts enter into a garden or a field of grain, gather together young virgins and take one locust and make one of the young girls its mother, and weeping for it intensely and burying it. Afterwards, they bring that mother to the mass of locusts, consoling her, so all the locusts will go out of the garden. Jacob: This, too, is a pagan act and those men—and women—who have put forth careful effort so that this piece of paganism be carried out should receive punishment from the canons.'

Priests and monks were using the Gospels, the Psalter, a work called the 'Lot of the Apostles'[610] and perhaps other books, to make charms—a practice Jacob condemned.[611] Priests and monks were also using their literacy to read various types of prognosticatory works in marketplaces and houses for audiences of men and women. Addai gives us several different titles: the *Book of Twitches*, the *Book of the Signs which are in the Human Body*, the *Book of Moons* and the *Book of Types of Thunder*.[612] Writing perhaps

[610] Preserved in Syriac in in BL Or. 4434, from the nineteenth century. G. Furlani published an Italian translation in his '*Una recensione siriaca delle* Sortes apostolorum,' *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti* 82.2 (1922-1923) pp. 357-363.

[611] See Mardin 310, fols. 202a-202b: ܐܕܝ، ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܩܠܝܪܝܩܘܣ ܐܘ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ ܠܡܣܒ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܐܘ ܠܢܦܫܗ ܐܘ ܠܐܢܫ ܐܚܪܢ. ܐܘ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܦܣܐ ܕܫ̈ܠܝܚܐ. ܐܘ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܕ. ܐܘ ܟܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܗܘ. ܐܘ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ. ܡܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܚܫ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܒܗܠܝܢ ܡܬܚܫܚ: ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܗ ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܦܬ̈ܓܡܐ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ: ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܦܣܐ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܕܫ̈ܠܝܚܐ: ܐܠܐ ܕܒܝܫܐ ܘܕܬ̈ܠܡܝܕܘܗܝ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܕ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܡܕܡ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܒܕ ܗܕܐ. ܐܢ ܡܢ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ: ܘܠܐ ܡܬܛܦܝܣ ܕܢܪܚܩ ܡܢ ܛܥܝܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ. ܢܦܠ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗ ܗܘ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܘܪܕܝܐ: ܘܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܦ ܕܪܓܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ. ܙܕܩ ܕܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܕܢܦܠ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗ. ܐܦ ܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܢܬܦܪܫ ܙܒܢܐ ܝܕܝܥܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܐܦ ܥܠܡܝܐ 'Addai: Whether it is right for a priest or a monk to make a charm either for himself or for another person either from that [work] which is called 'The Lot of the Apostles,' or from the Gospel, or from the Psalter [lit. 'David'], or at all from another book, whatever it be? Or, if it is not right, what should a person who uses such things suffer? Jacob: It is not right for a Christian to make charms at all, neither from the 'Lot' which is not of the Apostles, but rather of the Evil One and his disciples, nor from the Gospel, nor from the Psalter, nor from any other book at all. Now as for the one who does this: if he is a clergyman and will not be persuaded to distance himself from this error, he should fall from his rank. If he is a monk and educated and he has some level of ordination, he should, in addition to falling from his rank, also be cut off from communion for a certain period of time. The same [should be the case] for a layman.' According to Y. Manna, *Qāmūs kaldānī-'arabī* (Beirut, 1975), s.v. *nsab*, the idiom *nsab pethgāmā* means *raqā ruqyatan*, which means to give someone a charm (see e.g., J.G. Hava, *Al-Faraid: Arabic-English Dictionary*, 5th ed., (Beirut, 1982), s.v. *raqā*; B. al-Bustānī, *Muḥīṭ al-muḥīṭ: qāmūs muṭawwal li-lughat 'l-'arabiyya* (Beirut, 1977), s.v.; E.W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863-1893), s.v.) For other versions of this rule, see C. Kayser, *Die Canones Jakob's von Edessa* (Leipzig, 1886), pp. 2, 21 (Syriac). A shorter version can also be found in A. Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I*, (CSCO 367: SS 161) (Louvain, 1975), p. 268, with ET in idem., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 244. Vööbus understood *nsab pethgāmā* to mean 'take an answer,' one possible literal meaning of the two words. If Vööbus' construal is more correct, Jacob's canon would be aimed at forms of bibliomancy which attempted to divine the future based on passages from the Bible (or other books) found randomly.

[612] Mardin 310, fol. 202b: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܕܝܪܝܐ ܐܘ ܠܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܕܢܩܪܐ ܩܕܡ ܓܒܪ̈ܐ ܐܘ ܩܕܡ ܢܫ̈ܐ: ܐܘ ܒܫܘܩܐ ܐܘ ܒܒܝܬ ܒܥܠܐ: ܟܬܒܐ ܕܪ̈ܦܦܐ ܐܘ ܕܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܦܓܪ̈ܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ: ܐܘ ܣܦܪ ܣܗܪ̈ܐ ܐܘ ܣܦܪ ܙ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܪ̈ܥܡܐ: ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܟܠܗ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܗܕܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܢܩܢܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܐܘ ܕܢܩܪܐ ܒܗ. ܘܗܘ ܕܩܪܐ. ܡܟܣ ܒܘܫܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܩܒܠ 'Addai: Whether it is right for a monk or a clergyman to read before men or women, in the marketplace or in a house, 'The Book of Twitches,' or '[The Book] of the Signs of the Bodies of Humans,' or 'The Book of Moons,' or 'The Book of Kinds of Thunder.' Jacob: It is not right at all that this take place, or that a monk own something like this, or that he read it out. As for the one who does read: he should receive a punishment.'

about the time that Jacob was quitting his bishopric over widespread canonical abuse in the late 680s, the East Syrian John of Phenek would also lament the ubiquity of fortune-telling among Christians in Northern Mesopotamia. ‘For in Egypt,’ John observed, ‘the mother of enchanters, divination was not as abundant as it is in our time. Indeed, in Babel, augurs and soothsayers were not as numerous as they are now among Christian people.’[613] Jacob’s canons suggest that priests were apparently engaging in a wide variety of divinatory practices: they spoke incantations, tied knots, made charms, wrote out small texts to drive away headaches and heal tumors. They cast convulsions out of humans and out of animals. They would use the twitterings and movements of birds for auguries; even marks on the human body were being used to divine the future. These priests also interpreted dreams.[614]

Although Jacob would state that such people could not even be considered Christians, Addai’s question about them indicated that these individuals were in fact priests, something which suggests that some Christians, even among the elite, did not view practicing a wide variety of forms of divination as incompatible with Christianity.

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[613] My translation. For the Syriac text, see A. Mingana, *Sources Syriaques* vol. 1, (Mosul, 1908), p. 151*: ܒܡܨܪܝܢ ܓܝܪ ܐܡܐ ܕܚܪ̈ܫܐ: ܠܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܗܘܬ ܩܣܡܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܙܒܢܢ. ܒܒܒܠ ܓܝܪ ܠܐ ܗܟܢܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܝܢ ܢܚ̈ܫܐ ܡܢ ܩ̈ܨܡܐ ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܗܫܐ ܒܥܡܐ ܕܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ.

[614] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 134, 136: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܠܚܫܝܢ ܘܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܢ ܠܒܗ ܡܨܠܝܢ ܠܢ. ܘܩܛܪܝܢ ܩܛܪ̈ܐ ܘܥܒܕܝܢ ܩܡ̈ܝܥܐ ܘܟܬܒܝܢ ܟܬ̈ܒܘܢܐ ܠܒܘܥ̈ܝܐ ܘܠܟܐܒ ܪܫܐ. ܘܡܦܩܝܢ ܫ̈ܠܟܐ ܠܒܢ̈ܝܢܫܐ ܘܠܒܥܝܪ̈ܐ: ܘܥܒܕܝܢ ܩܣܡܝܢ ܘܡܢܚܫܝܢ ܐܦ ܒܦܪ̈ܚܬܐ ܘܢܛܪܝܢ ܐܦ ܩܠܗܘܢ. ܘܢܛܪܝܢ ܐܦ ܝܘ̈ܡܬܐ ܘܙܒ̈ܢܐ. ܘܐܦ ܦܓ̈ܥܐ ܘܨ̈ܒܘܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܓܕܫܝܢ. ܘܐܦ ܡܘ̈ܡܐ ܕܦܓܪ̈ܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ: ܘܥܡ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܦ ܦܘܫܩ ܚܠܡ̈ܐ: ܥܡ. ܒܝ̈ܫܬܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܐܠܘ ܒܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܬܡܢܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܝܫܐܝܬ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܥܒܕܝܢ. ܐܡܪ ܗܘܝܬ ܕܢܦܠܘܢ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗܘܢ ܕܟܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܥܠܡ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܗܘܝ ܒܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܕܠܡܡܢܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܝܬܝܪܬܐ ܗܝ ܡܠܬܐ ܀ ‘Addai: Concerning priests who mutter incantations and say that they are praying intently, and who tie knots and make amulets, and who write out little texts for tumors and headaches, and who cast out convulsions for human beings and beasts, and who make divinations and auguries using birds--they pay attention to both their twitterings and to their days and seasons and certain incidental actions which take place, they also [pay attention to] spots on human bodies, and along with these things, the interpretation of dreams, in addition to other evils. Jacob: If it were possible to reckon people who wickedly do one of these things Christians, I would have said that they should by all means fall from their rank. But because it is completely impossible to number them among Christians, such a statement is superfluous.’

For Christians in the seventh century this compatibilist view, so to speak, also extended to looking to and taking up Zoroastrian astrological practices in attempts to gain insight into future events. Unsurprisingly, Jacob condemned this practice as well. 'It is not right,' he wrote,

> for Christians to observe and believe in these things which are called by them '*d-surāde*,' because God is not circumscribed and forced to administer by the decisions of human beings who want to blather foolishness, nor are His mind or His actions comprehended by their examinations [sc., of the stars]. We should rather know that this name which is called '*d-surāde*' is Persian and Magian and is for those days in which they make divinations concerning their error, [days] in which they think that they will have a certain foreknowledge concerning things to come. Magians name them '*d-surāde*', as do insane blabberers among the Christians when they imitate them and want to make examinations, they say, and foreknow and foretell—based on their false and empty foreknowledge—idiotic things about future events. They have been made to call it by this pagan and Magian name when they imitate the pagan error of the Magians both in act and word.[615]

What Jacob of Edessa referred to as the '*d-surāde*,' George of the Arabs knew as 'the Examiners' or '*Sūrādē*' or '*Nāsūrdē*'—'I have heard them called by all three of these names,' he wrote—the eight days after the rising of Sirius, each of which was supposed to offer insight into the events of a separate month, from October through May.[616]

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[615] Mardin 310, fols. 211b-212a: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܢܛܪܘܢ ܘܢܗܝܡܢܘܢ. ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܣܘܪ̈ܕܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܬܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܡܬܥܠܨ ܕܢܬܦܪܢܣ ܡܢ ܦܣܩܐ ܕܒܢܝ̈ܢܫܐ ܕܨܒܝܢ ܕܢܒܥܘܢ. ܐܘ ܕܢܬܬܕܪܟܘܢ ܐܘ ܗܘܢܗ ܐܘ ܣܘܥܪ̈ܢܘܗܝ، ܡܢ ܒܨ̈ܝܬܗܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܕܥ ܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܫܡܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܕܣܘܪ̈ܕܐ: ܦܪܣܝܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܘܡܓܘܫܝܐ. ܘܠܝܘ̈ܡܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܩܣܡܝܢ ܒܗܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܛܠ ܛܥܝܘܬܗܘܢ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܡܣܒܪܝܢ ܕܩܕܡܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܩܕܡܘܬ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܡܛܠ ܕܥܬ̈ܝܕܢ: ܗܢܘܢ ܡܓܘ̈ܫܐ ܡܫܡܗܝܢ ܕܣܘܪ̈ܕܐ. ܐܦ ܒܪ̈ܐ ܥܢ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܟܕ ܡܬܕܡܝܢ ܒܗܘܢ: ܐܦ ܒܥܝܢ ܕܢܒܨܘܢ ܘܢܡܩܕܡܘܢ ܠܡ ܢܕܥܘܢ ܘܢܦܩܘܢ ܢܐܡܪܘܢ ܠܡܩܕܡܘܬ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܓܠܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܘܦܚܝܚܬܐ ܘܫܛܝܘܬܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܕܥܬ̈ܝܕܢ. ܒܫܡܐ ܗܢܐ ܚܢܦܝܐ ܘܡܓܘܫܝܐ ܐܬܬܥܒܕܘ ܕܢܩܪܘܢܝܗ̇. ܟܕ ܡܬܕܡܝܢ ܒܛܥܝܘܬܐ ܚܢܦܝܬܐ ܕܡܓܘ̈ܫܐ: ܘܒܥܒ̈ܕܐ ܘܒܡ̈ܠܐ܀

[616] See BL Add. 12,154, fols. 278b-279a (section 12.2.4 in my edition): ܗܠܝܢ ܕ̄. ܟܠ ܟܠ ܫܢܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܫ̈ܥܐ ܘ̄ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܒܝ̈ܣܢ ܒܓܘܗ̇ ܕܫܢܬܐ. ܡܬܬܦܣܩܝܢ ܥܠ ܗܢܝܢ ܩܕ̈ܡܝܬܐ. ܘܡܢܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܝܘܡܐ ܗܘ ܕܕܢܚ ܒܗ ܟܠܒܐ. ܠܬܡܢܝܐ ܝܘ̈ܡܬܐ ܚ̄. ܘܐܡܪܝܢ. ܕܝܘܡܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܡܘܕܥ. ܡܛܠ ܬܫܪܝ ܩܕܝܡ. ܕܬܪܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܬܫܪܝ. ܐܚܪܝ. ܕܓ̄ ܕܝܢ. ܡܛܠ ܟܢܘܢ ܩܕܝܡ. ܕܕ̄ ܕܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܟܢܘܢ ܐܚܪܝ. ܕܗ̄ ܕܝܢ. ܡܛܠ ܫܒܛ. ܕܘ̄ ܕܝܢ. ܡܛܠ ܐܕܪ. ܕܙ̄ ܕܝܢ. ܡܛܠ ܢܝܣܢ. ܕܚ̄ ܕܝܢ ܡܛܠ ܐܝܪ܀. ܘܗܠܝܢ ܚ̄ ܝܘ̈ܡܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܢܫܝܢ ܩܪܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܨܘܝ̈ܐ. ܐܘ ܣܘܪ̈ܕܐ ܐܘ ܢܣܘܪ̈ܕܐ. ܒܬܠܬܗܘܢ ܓܝܪ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܡ̈ܗܐ ܫܡܥܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ܀. 'Now, each of these 4 years has 6 intercalary hours inserted; they add these to the previous ones and then, after the day on which Sirius rises, they take 8 days and say, 'The first day makes known concerning October; the second,

Though George also rejected the practice of astrology, as we will see below, he had a solid understanding of its mechanics. Moreover, that both he and Jacob had occasion to write about Christians engaging in Zoroastrian astrological practices suggests that the phenomenon was far from an isolated one. In the seventh and eighth centuries, many Christians apparently had no problem with reconciling Christian belief in a personal, all-powerful God and the practice of astrology. Jacob of Edessa's *Hexaemeron* had included arguments against astrology which went back to Basil and, through Basil, to Origen:[617] indeed, Addai had written to Jacob about 'those who blame the stars for their illnesses.'[618] Christians had been using astrology for a long time. And they would continue to do so, even after Jacob. The Maronite Theophilos of Edessa (d. 785) was the astrologer of the Caliph al-Mahdī and was a strong defender of this art,[619] even on scriptural grounds. 'Whence did the Magi know that the the King was being born in Judaea?' Theophilos asked: from a prophecy or from a star rising—or comet or something else appearing? If the Magi knew of Jesus' birth, then why does the Gospel have them speaking of a star? 'If, then, a star appeared to the Magi, it is clear that the Magi were moved to see the birth of the King by means of astrological knowledge and the star itself was the indicator of the dominical birth. If this is clear to those who have a mind, astrology is true.'[620]

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concerning November; the third, concerning December; the fourth, concerning January; the fifth, concerning February; the sixth, concerning March; the seventh, concerning April; the eighth, concerning May. Now the 8 days are those which people call 'The Examiners', or Sūrādē or Nāsūrdē; I have heard them called by all three of these names.'

[617] See M. Wilks, 'Jacob of Edessa's Use of Greek Philosophy in His Hexaemeron,' in B. ter Haar Romeny, ed., *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (Leiden/Boston, 2008), pp. 236-238.

[618] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 140. See above, n. 607, for Syriac text and translation.

[619] See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 400-401.

[620] See F. Cumont and F. Boll, edd. *Catalogus codicum astrologorum graecorum*, vol. 5, *Codicum Romanorum partem priorem* (Brussels, 1904), pp. 237-238: πόθεν ἔγνωσαν οἱ μάγοι βασιλέα τκτόμενον ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ; ἀπὸ χρησμοῦ τινος ἢ ἀπὸ ἀστέρος ἐπιτολὴς ἤτοι κομήτου ἢ ἄλλου τινὸς φανέντος; καὶ εἰ μὲν

We have similar indications of this compatibilist view in other places as well. Among the feats of Theodota of Amid was unmasking a man in the monastery of Bar Ṣawmā who, the *Life* reports, had 'a spirit of sorcery:'

> He would repeat both the Old and the New [Testaments], the Psalms, and the [various] liturgies, and the opinion of the Teachers. He was clothed in a demon and he was leading the people astray. He had ascetic feats and vigils and prayers and would teach the people about repentance. He would reveal the sins and hidden things of the people; and all the people of the region began to go astray after him—the priests and the monks and all the people, since they supposed 'The Holy Spirit is in him,' and 'a prophet has been given in our day.'[621]

Theodota subsequently drove an evil spirit out of the man and showed him to be a demonic fraud. Nevertheless, what we have here is a concrete example of the sort of person Addai had referred to in his question to Jacob about priests practicing divination: a figure who, although regarded by at least some ecclesiastical elites to be in error and even satanic, still enjoyed a following among lay people and monks. Whatever this man's self-conception was, he was perceived by others as being holy and his idiom of self-representation was a Christian one. The sorcerer was certainly doing the things that one would expect a holy man to do, at least on the surface. Addai spoke to Jacob of a similar situation: a priest who claimed an ability to cast demons out of people and animals who had been possessed for less than forty days. For certain animals, like bulls and camels, he would have strong men hold or bind them and he would pray softly in their ear to cast the demon out. Jacob held that such a person was

ἀπὸ χρησμοῦ, περιττὸς ὁ τοῦ λόγος· τίς γὰρ ἦν χρεία ἀσρικῆς φάσεως καὶ σημασίας; εἰ δὲ ἀστὴρ ἐφάνη τοῖς μάγοις, δῆλον δι' ἀστρολογικῆς ἐπιστήμης ἐκινήθησαν οἱ μάγοι τοῦ εἰδέναι βασιλέως γέννησιν, καὶ ὁ αστὴρ αὐτὸς ἐγένετο σημάντωρ τῆς δεσποτικῆς ἐκτροπῆς· καὶ εἰ τοῦτο φανερόν τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσιν, ἀληθής ἐστιν ἡ ἀστρολογία.

[621] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 553b (section 108 in my edition; see also section 109). I am grateful to Peter Brown for pointing out to me that the Holy Man who knows the secret things of the people, before they have even told him, is also a common theme in early medieval Western Christianity. See the example of Aldebert in P. Brown, *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000*, 2nd ed., (Malden, MA./Oxford, 2003), p. 422.

neither a priest, nor a Christian, and was someone in league with demons to lead 'simple Christians' astray. Such a figure has left us no documents through which he can speak for himself. That he called himself a priest, however, and that he would rub himself with the blessings of the saints the day after the exorcism and indeed, that Jacob ordered that this priest's Christian followers be punished according to church canons, all suggest that the exorcist regarded himself as a Christian and was a respected figure in at least some parts of the Christian community.[622]

The spectrum of what was acceptable and what was not for a Christian was certainly person-relative and depending on the issue, different Christian authorities

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[622] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 136, 138, 140: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܕܐܢ ܗܘܐ ܐܢܫܐ ܠܒܥܝܪܐ ܐܘ ܠܫܐܕܐ. ܐܢ ܡܕܒܪ ܠܗ ܥܕܡ ܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܝܘܡܝܢ ܡܦܩ ܠܗ ܡܢܗ. ܘܐܢ ܬܘܪܐ ܐܘ ܓܡܠܐ ܐܘ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܣܓܝ ܥܣܩܐ ܨܒܘܬܗ. ܠܓܒܪܐ ܚܝܠܬܢܐ. ܐܘ ܐܚܕܝܢ ܠܗ. ܘܣܐܡ ܦܘܡܗ ܥܠ ܐܕܢܗ. ܘܡܨܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܡ ܒܐܕܢܗ ܕܗܘ ܡܢ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܬܟܬܫܐ ܒܗ ܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܫܡܥ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܡܪ. ܘܢܦܩ ܡܢܗ ܫܐܕܐ. ܘܐܢ ܓܕܫ ܘܢܦܩ ܐܢ ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܢܦܩ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܡܪܢ ܐܡܪ ܕܗܢܐ ܓܢܣܐ ܠܐ ܢܦܩ ܐܠܐ ܒܨܘܡܐ ܘܒܨܠܘܬܐ. ܘܣܩܘܒܠ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܘܡܣܢܐ ܠܟܘܡܪܘܬܐ ܐܡܪ. ܕܟܕ ܡܨܠܐ ܒܐܕܢܗ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܬܟܬܫܐ ܡܢ ܒܝܫܐ: ܐܢ ܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܝܘܡܝܢ. ܡܦܩ ܠܗ ܡܢܗ. ܐܝܟ ܕܕܡܝܐ ܚܝܠܗ ܕܗܘ ܗܢܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܡܪܢ. ܐܠܘ ܠܐ ܕܡܬܥܬܩܐ ܠܨܠܘܬܗ ܘܡܬܡܚܠܐ ܒܡܫܠܡ ܕܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܠܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܝܘܡܝܢ. ܝܕܝܥܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܠܡܦܩܘ ܠܫܐܕܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܫ. ܘܐܢ ܡܬܚܙܝܐ ܕܢܦܩ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܦܩ ܢܦܩ. ܐܠܐ ܨܒܝܢܗ ܕܢܫܪܪ ܠܛܘܥܝܬܗ ܗܘ ܕܬܠܡܝܕܗ ܕܨܠܐ ܠܗ ܡܛܫܝܐܝܬ ܕܢܗܘܡ ܒܟܠ ܙܒܢ ܠܐ ܨܒܐ ܕܢܫܝܛ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܦܠܚܝܢ ܠܗ. ܠܗܘ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܗܟܢܐ ܦܠܚ ܠܫܐܕܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܦܩܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܢܦܩܘܢ ܘܡܫܬܡܥܝܢ ܠܗ: ܘܣܩܘܒܠܐ ܠܡܠܐ ܕܡܪܢ ܟܕ ܡܛܥܐ ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܦܫܝܛܐ. ܠܐ ܘܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܚܫܒ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܬܛܥܝܢ ܡܢܗ ܕܩܪܝܒܝܢ ܠܗ. ܙܕܩ ܕܢܩܒܠܘܢ ܡܫܩܠ ܦܘܪܥܢܐ ܕܩܢܘܢܐ ܥܕܬܢܝܐ. ܗܝܕܝܢ ܕܠܝܘܡܐ ܠܡ ܕܒܬܪܗ ܡܫܚ ܠܗ ܒܒܘܪܟܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ. ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܢ ܗܘ: ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܢܟܝܠܘܬܐ ܕܒܝܫܘܬܗ. ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܢܟܣܐ ܡܛܥܝܢܘܬܗ ❖ 'Addai: About a priest who says that if a human or a beast of burden has a demon, he will drive him out if it has possessed him for forty days. But if it is a bull or a camel or another animal, it is a difficult matter. Strong men take hold of it or bind it and he places his mouth on its ear and prays, it is said, into the ear of whatever it is which is being afflicted, with no one hearing what he says, and the demon goes out from him. If it happens that it goes out, does it go out because of this? Jacob: Our Lord said, 'This type does not go out save by fasting and prayer.' (Matthew 17:20) The enemy of God and the one who despises the priesthood says that while he is praying in the ear of the one who is afflicted by an evil spirit, he will cast it out of him if the affair has not had a span of more than forty days: it seems that the power of such a one would be greater than Our Lord's if his prayer did not become old and weak as soon as forty days passed! It is therefore evident that it is not possible for him to cast a demon out of a person. And if it seems that it is going out, it is not that it is going out, but rather that it [the demon] wanted to confirm the error of its disciple who prayed to him secretly, for it does not always want to treat with scorn those who serve it. As for the one who thus serves the demons such that he orders them to go out and they obey him, and who is an opponent of the words of Our Lord even as he leads simple Christians astray: he should not be regarded as a priest, not even as a Christian. As for those who are led astray by him, who are close to him, they should receive a punishment from the ecclesiastical canons. At that point, [after the exorcism], on the following day, when he rubs the blessings of the saints on himself, it is nothing other than the artifice of his wickedness, for the purpose of covering up his deceit.'

might have divergent standards. Theodota's disapproval of a Christian who engaged in magical practices put him in agreement with the stance of Jacob of Edessa on such things; George of the Arabs, too, has left us a canon calling for the excommunication of everyone who made use of magical knots, amulets and incantations.[623] Theodota, however, and George's attitudes would conflict on a different topic related to the activities of Christian leaders and holy men. Theodota carried with him a bag of saints' relics as he traveled about, whereas George—who was his younger contemporary—has left us a canon ordering that monks roving around carrying such sacks not be received.[624]

Similarly, neither the Chalcedonian saint Timothy of Kākhushtā (fl. late eighth and early ninth century) nor his hagiographer saw any conflict between astrology and Christian piety, a stance which differed from that of George of the Arabs and Jacob of Edessa. 'I am skilled,' Timothy tells his sister who is unaware of his identity and asking the holy man about none other than Timothy himself, 'in reckoning the stars and I can

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[623] Bedjan, *Nomocanon*, p. 102: ܟܠ ܕܡܬܚܫܚ ܒܩܛܪ̈ܐ: ܐܘ ܒܩܡܝܥ̈ܐ: ܐܘ ܒܠܘܚܫ̈ܬܐ: ܢܗܘܐ ܚܪܡ 'Everyone who uses magical knots or amulets or incantations shall be excommunicate.' Compare such references to the use of magical knots with Quran 113: 'Say: "I take refuge with the Lord of the Daybreak from the evil of what He has created, from the evil of the darkness when it gathers, from the evil of the women who blow on knots, from the evil of an envier when he envies.' Translation A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York, 1955). The Sixty-First Canon of the Quinisext Council also condemned 'expellers of clouds, enchanters, amulet-givers and soothsayers,' as well as those who sought out soothsayers. Translation from H.R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees*, vol. 14 of P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series* (New York, 1900), p. 393.

[624] For this point, see A. Palmer, 'Saints' Lives With a Difference: Elijah on John of Tella (d. 538) and Joseph on Theodotos of Amida (d. 698),' *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984 Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, H.J.W. Drijvers, R. Lavenant, C. Molenberg and G.J. Reinink, eds., (Rome, 1987), p. 213, n. 43. For the canon, see A. Vööbus, ed. and trans., *Syriac and Arabic Documents Regarding Legislation Relative to Syrian Asceticism* (Stockholm, 1960), p. 99: ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܫܩܠܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܡܠܐ ܘ ܓܠܘܣܩ̈ܡܐ ܕܓܪ̈ܡܐ: ܘܡܬܟܪܟܝܢ: ܦܩܕܢ ܒܚܪܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܕܠܐ ܢܬܩܒܠܘܢ ❖ 'By God's excommunication we have ordered that the monks who carry bags and reliquaries of saints (i.e., the bones of the saints), and who are roaming around, shall not be received.' (Translation Vööbus).

reckon them so that I can tell you whether your brother is alive or dead.'[625] Timothy had no problem using the stars to find information (or at least giving the appearance of doing so) and the *Life* records Christian and astrological imagery in the same breath. 'He stood there computing with his fingers for a while,' it reports,

> He then said to her, 'Lady, know that your brother is alive and well, and in excellent health. Stellar computation indicates that he's wearing monastic garb and that he's near to you and not far. Know also: the basis and validity of this computation is derived solely from the signs of the zodiac and the wandering stars in the revolving spheres of heaven. And yet, because of what I shall request as a reward from Christ's recompense, this night I shall apply myself again to computation, that I might learn where he is and inform you tomorrow.[626]

George of the Arabs fielded a question from John of Litarb about the influence and meaning that the rising of Sirius had on human lives—this was related to the practice of the Zoroastrian *sarūde* which I have already mentioned. Such a question, George told Jacob, had nothing to do with the act of calculating important dates on a church calendar; attempting answers at such questions took one into a decidedly non- and even anti-Christian domain:

> Instead, [this matter] belongs to the procedures (ἔφοδοι) of astronomy (ἀστρονομία) and is related to the craft of the astronomers (ἀστρονόμοι). Or, it would be more accurate and true to say: it does not belong to the craft of pagan astronomers (ἀστρονόμοι) who only have labor or care to know or make known the movements of the lights of heaven (I mean their [movements] lengthwise and crosswise, ascending and descending, in the sphere (σφαῖρα) of heaven). It belongs, rather, to the craft of demonic astrologers (ἀστρολόγοι), who allege that our affairs and those of this world are woven together and guided according to the movement, intermingling, and conjunction of the lights with one another and their standings in various places in the heavenly body, thereby

[625] My translation. Text and a different ET in J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala edd. and trans., *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 48) (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 550 (Arabic), 551 (ET).

[626] Translation J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala in *idem*., edd. and trans., *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 48) (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 550 (Arabic), 551 (ET).

> depriving God, the Creator of all (even according to their beliefs) from His administration and direction of His created beings and their changes.[627]

Although he labeled it pagan and even demonic, George was certainly aware of the language and ideas of astronomy and astrology, as his two letters on astronomical and astrological topics attest. In the case of John's particular question about the influence and significance of the rising of Sirius and the particular sign of the Zodiac in which it rises, George offered a summary of the theory behind this idea, which I have already alluded to above. But George rejected it all. 'I, however, am a Christian,' he told John, 'and regard these things as empty nonsense and a load of rubbish, for I have learned from the divine astrologer (ἀστρολόγος), who says "The Lord does all that he wills in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all the deep," (Ps. 135:6) and "The earth is the Lord's in its fullness, the world and all its inhabitants (Ps. 24:1)."'[628]

George had had to confront an interest in astrology and belief that the heavens exerted influence over human lives was present both inside and outside the church. In the introduction to his *memra* on the church calendar (χρονικόν), he reports a run-in he had had with a group of pagan astrological determinists:

> One day, a man from among the pagans (*ḥanpe*) was boasting while in one of their gatherings, greatly praising their poets, saying that it was only given to

[627] BL Add. 12,154, fols. 278a-278b (section 12.2.2 in my edition): ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܦܘܩܕܘ ܐܢܬܘܢ܆ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ. ܘܐܝܣܛܘܟܣܝܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܠܗ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܠܘܓܘܬܐ. ܐܘ ܗܝ ܕܡܢܬ ܫܬܬܐ ܘܫܪܪܐ ܠܡܐܡܪ. ܠܐ ܠܗ ܐܝܬ ܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܠܘܓܘܬܐ ܫܡܗܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܠܡܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܟܠܐ ܘܡܢ ܡܦܬܐ ܠܡܕܒܪ ܐܘ ܠܡܕܒܪܘ: ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܬܬܠܡܕܘܬܐ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ ܕܥܡܡܐ: ܗܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ ܘܦܝܣܝܩܐ: ܒܡܫܡܫܬܐ ܒܗܬ ܘܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܣܛܘܟܣܐ ܕܟܠܗ̇ ܕܡܫܡܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܠܗ ܐܝܬ ܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܠܘܓܘܬܐ ܒܗ ܫܘܟܪܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܠܒܫܬ ܡܬܬܠܡܕܘܬܐ ܘܡܬܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܘܡܬܦܫܩܢܘܬܐ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ ܕܒܢܝ ܚܪܕܐ. ܘܦܘܠܚܢܗܘܢ ܕܒܕܘܟܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܕܟܠܒܫܡܝܐ ܥܡܡܝܐ. ܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܒܪܝܢ ܘܡܬܕܒܪܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܠ ܘܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܠܡܐ ܗܢܐ. ܒܪ ܚܠܦ ܠܗ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܒܪܘܝܐ ܕܟܠ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܠܗܘܢ܆. ܡܢ ܡܦܪܢܣܢܘܬܐ ܒܗܬ ܘܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܕܒܪܝܬܗ ܘܕܫܘܚܠܦܐ ܕܝܠܗܝܢ. I am grateful to Sebastian Brock for helping me understand the Syriac text of this passage.

[628] BL Add. 12,154, fols. 279a-279b (section 12.2.6 in my edition): ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ. ܘܪܒܐ ܗܡܝܡܐ ܘܣܪܝܩܘܬܐ ܦܠܛܬܐ ܣܒܝܒܝܢ. ܝܠܦܬ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܐܣܛܪܘܠܘܓܐ ܒܗܘ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܐܡܪ. ܕܟܠ ܕܨܒܐ ܥܒܕ ܡܪܝܐ ܒܫܡܝܐ ܘܒܐܪܥܐ. ܒܝܡܡܐ ܘܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܬܗܘܡܐ. ܘܕܡܪܝܐ ܗܝ ܐܪܥܐ ܒܡܠܝܗ̇. ܬܒܝܠ ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܡܘܪܝܗ̇+

them to speak in measured words concerning astronomical calculations. He began reciting and bringing forth passages from them, person by person, in polished and varied speech and [with] something on the subject of astronomical calculations, setting down many bitter things with a little bit of honey, that he might give hidden bitterness along with the sweetness of the honey. When he had clearly set forth something on the subject of astronomical calculations, he showed forth and said that there are many guides, stating that these are the wandering stars: they have governance in this cosmos. According to what he blathered on about, each one of the twelve signs of the zodiac has governance. When reproach seized me because of his shameful prattle, I responded for some time with many words against him. For this reason, I have composed this short memra on account of the measured speech through which that person boasted and I have set down in it certain sorts of astronomical calculations which it is necessary for members of the Church to know. But those types [of calculations] which are not useful to us, we have left behind—we have taken from the bush its roses and left behind the thorns. We shall let these things which have no use to us be dismissed, things which cause falsehood and schisms and which bring forth dispute...[629]

George's debate was not an isolated incident, either. Jacob of Edessa quoted from a defense (συνηγορία) concerning fate and the decree of the seven stars over the things which take place in the world made by an unnamed scholar from Harran against Vologases, an Edessene Bardaisanite, who had been speaking with him against such ideas.[630] And according to his *Life*, Simeon of the Olives was consecrated bishop of Harran in AD 700 on account of his debating skills: 'for there was no one in the entire church who was greater than Mar Simeon,' the *Life* states,

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[629] The Syriac text can be found in E. Sachau, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin*: *Verzeichniss der Syrischen Handschriften*, vol. 2, (Berlin, 1899), pp. 720-721: ܟܕ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܗܘܦܟܐ ܐܚܪ ܡܢ ܫܘܦܐ ܒܗ ܡܫܬܥܠ. ܒܡܠܬܐ ܕܫܘܦܐ ܡܡܠܠ ܗܘܐ ܠܒ ܠܦܘܐܪܝܛܘܗܝ. ܟܕ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܗܘ ܠܡ ܚܠܘܗ ܕܡܢܟ. ܠܡܡܠܠܘ ܥܠ ܚܘܫܒܢܐ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܗܡܠܘܬܐ. ܘܒܪ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܚܘܝܬܐ ܕܐܚܪ ܐܚܪ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܒܡܠܬܐ ܫܦܝܪܬܐ ܘܫܚܠܦܬܐ ܘܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܚܘܫܒܢܐ. ܟܕ ܣܐܡ ܗܘܐ ܣܓܝ ܡܪܝܪܬܐ ܘܩܠܝܠ ܕܕܒܫܐ. ܕܥܡ ܚܠܝܘܬܐ ܕܕܒܫܐ ܢܬܠ ܡܪܝܪܘܬܐ ܟܣܝܬܐ. ܟܕ ܓܠܝܐܝܬ ܬܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܚܘܫܒܢܐ. ܚܘܝ ܘܐܡܪ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܐܝܬ ܣܓܝܐܐ. ܟܕ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܟܘܟܒܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܦܠܢܝܬܐ. ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܗܢܐ ܥܠܡܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܕܦܛܪ ܦܛܘܪ ܗܘܐ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܡܘܫܐ ܘܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܘܒܕ ܡܢ ܚܣܕܐ ܐܚܕܬܢܝ ܒܗܝ ܦܛܪܘܬܗ ܕܦܠܓܐ ܐܢܐ. ܦܢܝܬ ܠܡܡܠܠܘ ܡܛܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ ܠܘܩܒܠܗ. ܘܒܕ ܗܢܐ ܥܒܕܬ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܒܨܝܪܐ. ܒܥܠܬ ܒܡܠܬܐ ܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܒܗ ܐܫܬܒܗܪ ܗܘ ܒܪܢܫܐ. ܘܣܡܬ ܒܗ ܐܕܫܐ ܡܢ ܚܘܫܒܢܐ. ܕܐܠܨܐ ܠܒܢܝ ܥܕܬܐ ܕܢܕܥܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ. ܠܐܕܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܚܫܚܝܢ ܠܢ ܫܒܩܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ. ܘܫܩܠܢ ܡܢ ܣܢܝܐ ܘܪܕܐ. ܘܫܒܩܢ ܟܘܒܐ. ܢܫܒܘܩ ܕܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܚܫܚܢ ܠܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܕܓܠܘܬܐ ܘܦܠܓܘܬܐ ܥܒܕܢ. ܘܚܪܝܢܐ ܡܘܠܕܢ.

[630] See I.B. Chabot, ed., *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron* (CSCO 92: SS 44) (Louvain, 1953), p. 61. For this point, see M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma* (Cambridge, 1981), p. 151.

> for [Simeon] was able to respond to all debates and questions, as there survived in Ḥarran the old leaven [1 Cor. 5:7] of the worship of idols and of the Roman teachings of the Manichaeans who were living in the city of Ḥarran and in the regions which were around it. They appeared like tares (ζιζάνια) among the wheat in the land of Syria.[631]

George had found himself in a public confrontation with a non-Christian advocate of some sort of astrological determinism. From his own writings, however, as well as those of Jacob and John of Phenek, we have seen that such positions, as well as other 'pagan' practices had not insignificant followings in the church. The location of this story of his encounter at the beginning of a *memra* on the church calendar gives us a hint why someone like George might have a legitimate reason to study the stars: astronomy was important in calculating the feast days of the liturgical year. Given the nature of our sources and the surviving evidence, however, it is of course impossible to gauge how widespread practices such as astrology and divination were among Christians.

An Orthodox Minority

I will take this point up more extensively in the final section of this dissertation, but based on all these things, one is tempted to suggest that orthodoxy—understood as the views of theological elites on correct doctrine, be they Miaphysite, Chalcedonian, or Nestorian—was actually a minority position. Not only were the boundaries between competing churches fuzzy, the boundaries between what theological elites regarded as Christian and non-Christian were also rather porous. Expanding our understanding of

[631] See Mardin 8/259, fol. 115v; the date of Simeon's consecration is on fol. 117r. It should be noted that this text has experienced later additions. For the history of the *Life* of Simeon of the Olives and comments about its later medieval accretions, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 168-171 and A. Palmer, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris frontier: The Early History of Ṭur 'Abdin* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 159-165. Peter Brown has pointed out to me that the Pauline phrase 'old leaven' (cf. 1 Cor 5:8) is frequently used to refer to pagan survivals.

the range and possible spectrum of Christian belief and practice can be very helpful in obtaining a richer understanding of seventh and early eighth-century society and culture in the Middle East.

The State of the Question

Let me therefore take stock here for a moment. I have tried to show that the boundaries separating the different confessional factions within the larger Christian community were not clear; what's more, the boundaries between Christianity and non-Christianity were not even clear. There were people, like Jacob of Edessa, George of the Arabs and the Patriarch Athanasios of Balad who felt very strongly about the need for maintaining strong separation, liturgical and otherwise, between people with opposing Christological stances. But we can see, dimly, through the prism of their writings, that there were many others who did not feel the same way. Hence their attempts at not just boundary maintenance, but also boundary drawing.

An upshot of the diversity of Christian confessional stances and the incomplete ecclesiastical and communal separation which existed on the ground was an intense competition between rival factions for followers among the 'simple people' and others who were still very much up for grabs in terms of their confessional allegiance. Rule by Arabs could have an effect of leveling the competitive playing field in this regard. Writing some time before AD 693-694, the East Syrian John of Phenek reported that the reign of Muʿāwiya beginning in 661 ushered in a time of tranquility and peace in Northern Mesopotamia and Miaphysites seized this moment to expand their communion at the cost of Chalcedonians. 'The accursed heretics, John wrote,

> taking the situation then as beneficial to themselves, instead of converting and baptising the pagans, in accordance with ecclesiastical canons, started on a

> retrograde (kind of) conversion, turning almost all the churches of the Byzantines to their own wicked standpoint, reviving and re-establishing something that had been overthrown; (as a result) the majority of the Westerners were regularly using (the addition to the Trisagion of) the words, "...immortal, who was crucified for us.' All the churches became like uncultivated land.[632]

What's more, by the late seventh century it seems that Chalcedonians were making gains of their own at the expense of the Miaphysites. The *Life* of Theodota of Amid reports that Byzantines were attempting to force Miaphysite refugees on the borders between Byzantine and Arab-ruled territories to convert to Chalcedonianism. Theodota, for his part, did his best to combat this. 'He had had the habit,' the *Life* tells us, 'of writing and sending to the region of the fortresses through the intermediary of his disciple, to the needy who were dwelling there, that they might take hold of the faith of Orthodoxy and that the leaders of the heretics not cause them to deviate from the truth through disturbances or threats.' Theodota himself would threaten the Chalcedonian elites who were forcing needy Miaphysite refugees from the Arabs to change confessions in exchange for aid. In exchange for a promise from these elites that they would not force Miaphysite refugees to convert, Theodota agreed to pray that God would protect them from an Arab military leader whom they feared.[633] Theodota himself would be involved in bringing heretical Christians in this region to Miaphysite Orthodoxy, though not by force. His *Life* reports that on account of reports of

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[632] Translation S.P. Brock, 'North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John bar Penkāyē's *Rīš Mellē*,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987), p. 63; see *ibid*., p. 52 for a date some time before 693-694. For the Syriac text, see A. Mingana, *Sources Syriaques* vol. 1, (Mosul, 1908), p. 147*:
ܗܪܩܠܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܗܦܟܬܐ: ܒܗ ܢܣܒܘ ܡܕܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܠܕܒܝܐ ܕܗܟܢ ܗܘܐ: ܚܠܦ ܕܐܬܠܒܟܘ ܘܡܚܕܘ ܠܣܢܩܐ: ܐܝܟ ܗܘܝܐ
ܕܒܪܢܝܬܐ: ܫܪܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܡܬܠܒܟܘܬܐ ܗܦܟܬܐ. ܘܠܟܠܗܝܢ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܕܪ̈ܗܘܡܝܐ ܒܙܒܢ ܩܠܝܠ: ܐܗܦܟܘ ܐܢܘܢ
ܠܪܫܝܥܘܬܗܘܢ. ܘܐܚܝܘܗ ܘܐܩܝܡܘܗ ܠܗܝ ܕܡܣܬܚܦܐ ܗܘܬ: ܘܐܡܝܢܐܝܬ ܒܗ، ܕܠܐ ܡܝܘܬܐ ܕܐܨܛܠܒ ܚܠܦܝܢ:
ܡܬܬܡܠܠ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܥܪ̈ܒܝܐ. ܘܗܘܝ ܐܝܟ ܐܪܥܐ ܒܘܪܬܐ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ

[633] See St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fols. 554a-554b, (sections §115-§116 in my edition).

Theodota's miraculous activity and his pious behavior, 'many from among the heretics made atonement.'[634]

The small-time theological debates and discussions whose ghosts I have tried to conjure are another manifestation of this competition between groups. In this environment, advances of rivals were viewed with utmost seriousness. The first time Simeon of the Olives built the church of Mar Theodore in Nisibis, it was destroyed by Nestorians.[635] I have already spoken of Isho'yahb's ire at the Miaphysite construction of a church in Tikrit; the consternation that the act elicited was enough to provoke Isho'yahb into arguing that the end times were upon him and Gabriel the Metropolitan of Kirkuk, the recipient of his letter.[636] The erection of ecclesiastical structures by rival groups would trigger intense lobbying of authorities to permit or hinder such projects: Isho'yahb attributed Miaphysite success in Tikrit in part to the susceptibility of the rulers to 'silver whispers and gilded petitions,'[637] but from Bar Hebraeus we learn that Isho'yahb himself was able to prevent the construction of a Miaphysite church in Mosul

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[634] See Mardin 275, fol. 262v (p. 532): ܘܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ ܗܘ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܢܚܣܘ ܠܗܘܢ For the Karshūnī, see St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 554b (section §118 in my edition).

[635] See Mardin 8/259, fol. 112v (section §21 in my translation).

[636] Duval, ed., *Išōʿyahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: SS 2, 64) (Paris, 1904), pp. 81-82: ܡܟܝܠ ܗܟܝܠ ܥܠ ܥܠܡܐ ܐܒܘܢ ܐܒܘܢ ܪܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܚܪܬܗ ܕܚܪܬܐ ܐܬܝܐ ܕܪܕ ܐܬܐ. ܘܐܬܬ̈ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܕܘ ܘܐܚܕܬ ܟܠ. ܡܪܘܕܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܡܩܕܡܐ ܐܡܝܪܐ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܕܥܡ ܡܛܠ ܓܠܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܣܛܢܐ ܐ̈ܠܨܐ ܗܝ ܕܬܗܘܐ. ܐܘ ܩܪܝܒܐ ܗܝ ܠܗ. ܐܘ ܟܒܪ ܫܪܝܬ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܟܕܘ ܠܡܣܥܪ ܡܣܥܪܢܐ ܒܣܘܥܪܢܐ: ܗܿ، ܕܢܐܬܐ ܠܡ ܒܪܗ ܕܐܢܫܐ ܘܢܫܟܚ ܟܝ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܐܪܥܐ... 'Now, therefore, o God-loving father of ours, the end of the end has arrived upon the world and the apostasy, (which was foretold by the spirit of God [cf. 1 Thes. 2:3]) has already come and taken hold of all—along with the appearance of Satan which must take place. The [fulfillment] of the passage, 'The Son of Man will come, but will he find faith upon the earth?' [Luke 18:8] is perhaps either close or it has already begun to take place in reality…' For Gabriel as Metropolitan of Kirkuk, cf. Fiey, "Īšōʿyaw le Grand,' p. 327.

[637] Duval, ed., *Išōʿyahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: SS 2, 64) (Paris, 1904) p. 82: ܚܝܠܐ ܕܫܢܝܘܬܗܘܢ ܢܣܒ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܣܒܪܐ ܫܐܕܢܝܐ ܘܦܬܚܐ ܠܗܝܢ ܠܡܨܠܚܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܫܟܚܘ ܡܢ ܥ̈ܠܠܬܐ ܕܓ̈ܠܝܢ. ܩܕܡ ܡܢ ܘܩܕܡܝܬܐ: ܕܠܝܠܘܬ ܡܫܬܥܒܕܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܠ̈ܝܛܢܐ ܕܗܫܐ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܠ̈ܚܫܐ ܕܟܣܦܐ. ܘܒܒܥ̈ܘܬܐ ܡܕܗ̈ܒܬܐ ܡܬܩܪܒܝܢ ܠܘܬܗܘܢ 'The force of their lunacy has taken them with demonic hope and they have found opportunity for their success from causes which are manifest: First and foremost, the ease of submission of the present rulers to those who draw near to them with silver whispers and golden petitions.'

through the expenditure of large sums of money to bribe local officials.[638] When Simeon of the Olives' attempts to build the church of St Theodore in Nisibis were stymied by Nestorian leaders forbidding their church members from working on the project, he went to Gawargī of Anḥel, who held authority over all of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, for help. Gawargī was initially skeptical of Miaphysites (presumably because he was a Chalcedonian),[639] but Simeon eventually won him over to his cause by working a miracle; Gawargī was able to provide three hundred men to help in the construction of the church.[640]

Another form the competition for believers took can be seen in the *Life* of Marūtha, the Miaphysite Metropolitan of Takrit (d. 649), which reports that in the late sixth century, Nestorians who wished to 'steal the simple people over to their error' were diligently establishing schools in every village and spreading their chanting and hymnody in the region of Beth Nehūdrā around Nineveh. This prompted a counter movement by zealous Miaphysites to establish a number of their own schools in the same region.[641] The East Syrian Catholicos Ishoʿyahb II (sed. AD 628 – 643-646)

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[638] J.B. Abbeloos and T.J. Lamy edd., *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Ecclesiasticum Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 3 (Paris/Louvain, 1877), col. 127: ܘܩܡ ܒܬܪܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܬܠܝܬܝܐ. ܕܐܝܬܘ̄ ܗܘܐ ܡܩܕܡܝܢ ܡܝܛܪ̄ܘ ܕܡܘܨܠ. ܗܢܐ ܕܟܠܝ ܠܐܪ̈ܬܘܕܘܟܣܘ. ܕܨܒܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܡܒܢܐ ܥܕܬܐ ܒܡܘܨܠ. ܘܦܙܪ ܡܠܘܐܐ ܫܘܚܕܐ ܒܟܡܝܘܬܐ ܕܩܪܒ ܠܪ̈ܫܢܐ ܘܒܛܠܗ ܠܒܢܝܢܐ. 'And after him, Ishūʿ the Third rose up, who had formerly been the Metropolitan of Mosul. It was he who hindered the Orthodox who wanted to build a church in Mosul and spent a great sum in bribes which he presented to the rulers, and stopped the construction.'

[639] See comments on fol. 113r of Mardin 8/259 about Gawargī being from the West and not trusting the holy men of the Syrians because he had grown up with the Romans.

[640] See Mardin 8/259, fols. 112v-114r (sections §22-§26 in my translation).

[641] See F. Nau, ed. and trans., *Histoires d'Ahoudemmeh et de Marouta métropolitains Jacobites de Tagrit et de l'orient (VI^e et VII^e) siècles)* (PO 3) (Paris, 1909), pp. 65-66. ܢܣܛܘܪ̈ܝܢܐ ܓܒܪ̈ܐ ܕܡܕܒܪܢܫܐ. ܒܗ ܓܝܪ ܠܡܓܢܒ ܠܦܫܝ̈ܛܐ ܠܘܬ ܛܘܥܝܝܗܘܢ. ܘܙܪܝܙܝܢ ܡܥ̈ܕܥܬܐ ܕܝܠܦܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܦܟ ܦܫܝܩ ܠܗܠ ܓܒܘ ܒܡܫܢܬܐ ܘܒܬ̈ܫܒܚܬܐ ܣܠܩܬܐ. ܗܘܬ ܕܝܢ ܘܡܛܠ ܫܘܦܪܘܬܐ ܕܒܠܥܕܐ ܘܦܪܫܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܘܕܐܒܠܘ ܒܡܕܪܐ ܒ̈ܬܐ ܕܐܪ̈ܟܠܬܐ ܘܢܩܫ ܒܢ̈ܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܠܬܐ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܬܐ ܒܟܠܬܐ ܕܢܣܒܝܢ ܒ̈ܥܘܬܗܘܢ. ܒܟܠ ܦܢܝܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܐܡܪ ܣܓܝ ܗܘ ܘܡܟܒܘ ܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܘܠܟܣܘ ܐܝܟ ܒܩܠܐ ܘܡܩܢܝܬܐ ܘܒܢ̈ܝܬܐ ܘܡܥܪ̈ܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܒܢܝܐ ܥܣܘܬܐ ܡܬܐܡܪ̈ܝܢ ܒܡܠܡܕܢ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܡܫ̈ܡܫܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܪ̈ܘܚܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܗ ܕܠܒܝܐ ܡܬܠܡܫܐ ܐܬܬܐܡܪܘ: ܘܐܬܬܦܣܩܘ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܐ ܦܠܠܘ ܕܢܠܝܢ ܘܡܟܢܫܝܢ. ܕܦܫܝܛܐ ܗܝ ܕܐܬܬܚܫܚܘܢ ܒܦܫܝ̈ܛܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܘܠܒܝܐ ܠܗ

established schools and was known for his concern for doctrine.[642] After becoming Catholicos ca. 650, Isho'yahb III, his successor decided to build a school at the monastery of Beth 'Ābe. His plan, Thomas of Marga tells us, was

> to bring to it teachers and masters and expositors, and to gather together many scholars and to provide for them in all things. And he had made ready in his mind, and had resolved and decided to carry out this work in such a way that for every child who was trained and instructed therein the monastery might be near at hand for the purpose of [his becoming a disciple, so that the school and the monastery might become one; the school to give birth to and rear scholars, and the monastery to teach and sanctify them for the labours of the ascetic life.[643]

Rabban Sabroy was a Miaphysite contemporary of Isho'yahb III. In addition to writing two volumes refuting Nestorians, he founded a school in a village near Nineveh where

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ܕܠܒܗܘܢ ܠܫܒ̈ܝܢܐ ܒܪ ܡܢ: ܥܒܪܘ ܕܢܣܒܘܢ ܐܣܟ̈ܘܠܣ ܡܫܬܐܣܬܐ. ܘܐܬܚܝܠܘ ܒܗ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܢܘܗܕܪܐ. ܘܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܒܝܬ ܩܩܝ. ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܒܒܝܬ ܬܪܠܝ ܘܒܬܠ ܨܠܡܐ ܘܒܒܝܬ ܒܢܝ. ܘܒܫܘܪܙܩ ܩܪܝܬܗ ܕܗܢܐ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܐܒܘܢ.... 'Indeed, Nestorians who were in the East, wanting to steal the simple to their error and to bewitch the hearing of the laypeople who are very easy to steal over with sweet songs and melodies, and moreover, for the sake of flattering the world and having leadership over it, and that they might thereby consume the houses of widows and the wives of men, according to the passage in the Gospel, [and] as a pretence they draw out their prayers (cf. Mt. 23:13 Peshitta, Mt. 23:14 Greek). In every one of their villages, so to speak, they worked hard and established a school and they organized them with tunes and songs and hymns and Psalms which were said uniformly in all of their places. But the believers, lovers of God, moved by praiseworthy zeal, and convinced by the Apostle Paul who counseled and exhorted, 'It is good that you be always sought out because of virtues,' (Gal. 4:14) and 'Your zeal has stirred up many' (2 Cor. 9:2), began to establish excellent schools: first of all in the region of Beth Nehūdrā—and they first made a foundation in the village which is called Beth Qāqī and afterwards in Beth Tarlī and in Tel Ṣalmā and in Beth Banī and in Shūrzaq the village of this blessed one who is our father...' cf. the Nau's FT; I have followed for the most part his vocalizations of place names in this translation. Also, in general, see Morony, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, pp. 374-375.

[642] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 3, col. 113: ܘܗܘܬ ܠܗ ܠܩܬܘܠܝܩܐ ܡܢܗ ܝܨܝܦܘܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܥܠ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܘܒܢܐ ܐܣܟ̈ܘܠܣ ܕܣܪ̈ܝܩܢ ܗܘ̈ܝ. 'The Catholicos had great concern for doctrine and founded schools—which were vain.' Bar Hebraeus' negative attitude towards Isho'yahb's efforts can be explained by ecclesiastical rivalry between Miaphysites and Nestorians.

[643] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 132; Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 74: ܝ ܒܗ ܕܢܝܬܐ ܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܒܕܘܟܬ ܡܠܦܢܘܬܗ. ܘܢܬܬܣܝܡ ܒܟܠ ܕܡܬܒܥܝܐ: ܘܢܬܠܐ ܠܗ ܡܠܦ̈ܢܐ ܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ ܘܡܦܫ̈ܩܢܐ. ܘܢܟܢܫ ܐܣ̈ܟܘܠܝܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ: ܘܢܬܪ̈ܣܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܟܠ. ܘܐܬܛܝܒ ܒܪܥܝܢܗ، ܘ ܓܙܪ ܘܦܣܩ ܠܡܣܥܪܗ ܠܣܘܥܪܢܐ ܗܢܐ: ܒܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܟܠ ܐܣܟܘܠܝܐ ܕܡܬܪܒܐ ܘܡܬܪܕܐ ܒܗ: ܩܪܝܒ ܗܘ ܠܗ ܕܝܪܐ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ. ܕܬܗܘܐ ܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܘܕܝܪܐ ܚܕ. ܕܗܝ ܡܢ ܬܐܠܕ ܘܬܪܒܐ: ܕܝܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܬܠܡܕ. ܘܬܩܕܫ ܠܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ.

some three hundred students studied and which produced a number of teachers.[644] Thomas of Marga listed 24 different schools founded in the region of Marga by Babai of Gebilta in the mid-eighth century, and relates the report that Babai founded some 60 schools.[645] A bit earlier than this, Simeon of the Olives (d. 734) would build a monastery of Mar Lazarus near the town of Habsenus. In the town itself, he built a school: 'there came to be in Habsenus teachers and chanters and readers and exegetes the likes of which do not exist in the world,' Simeon's *Life* reports, 'for the inhabitants of this village are quick-witted and receivers of instruction, down till today.'[646] Having schools—a place to train one's laity as well as clergy—was essential for a group or movement to maintain its existence.

The Nest of Eagles: Qenneshre

This establishment of rival Nestorian and Miaphysite schools took place decades after the Chalcedonians carried out several campaigns of purging monasteries in the region of Antioch, Euphratasia, Osrhoene and Mesopotamia of their Miaphysite monks in the 520s and 530s.[647] Among the monasteries purged of their Miaphysite monks was that of St Thomas at Seleucia-Pieria near Antioch. In about 530, the Abbot of the monastery, a man named John bar Aphtonia, led a group of Miaphysite monks

[644] See Barsoum, *al-Lu'-lu al-manthūr*, p. 287 and cf. the ET in I.A. Barsoum, *History of Syriac Literature and Science (*Kitab al-Lulu al-Manthur fi Tarikh al-Ulum wa al-Adab al-Suryaniyya*)*, trans. and ed. M. Moosa, (Pueblo, CO, 2000), p. 109. Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 245. The report of this comes in a letter written by David bar Paulos, see I.E. Rahmani, ed. and trans., *Studia Syriaca*, fasc. 1 (Charfeh, 1904), pp. ܡܗ – ܢܒ, reference to 318 students on p. ܡܘ

[645] For the monasteries, see E.A.W. Budge, *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 296-297. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), pp. 143-144. For the date of Babai's activity, see vol. 1, p. cviii.

[646] Mardin 8/259, fol. 123r.

[647] For the purge of AD 525-531, see F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, trans. *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London, 1899), pp. 209-212. In general, see V. Menze, *Justinian and the Making of the Syrian Orthodox Church*, (Oxford, 2008), pp. 106-144.

eastwards and established a new monastery called Qenneshre on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, across from the town of Europos (the modern Jirbās).[648] We have some evidence that the monastery of St Thomas had been a center of Greek education for Syriac-speaking monks and Qenneshre continued this tradition.[649] John bar Aphtonia himself knew Greek and composed works in Greek.[650] And within decades of Qenneshre's founding, we have evidence that it already become a place where education in the Greek language was probably going on,[651] one from which bishops were being taken,[652] and a place which was perhaps very beautiful and a destination for visitors.[653]

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[648] cf. F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, trans., *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London, 1899), pp. 209-210: 'Now the believing cloistered monks in the East had also, moreover, been expelled and had withdrawn from the year three until the year nine [sc. AD 525-531—see footnote 8, p. 209], one week, that is, of years, from their cloisters in the district of Antioch and in Euphratesia, and also in Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. And the cloister of Thomas at Seleucia with the brotherhood came to Kenneshre on the Euphrates, and was there settled by the learned John the archimandrite, the son of Apthonia.' In the 1990s, Spanish archaeologists claimed to have located the site of Qenneshre, (see A. González Blanco and G. Matilla Séiquer, 'Cristianización: Los Monasterios del Ámbito de Qara Qûzâq,' in *Antigüedad y Cristianismo* XV (1998), pp. 399-415, and A. González Blanco, 'Christianism on the Eastern Frontier,' in *Archaeology of the Upper Syrian Euphrates: The Tishrin Dam Area*, ed., G. del Olmo Lete and J.-L. Montero Fenollós, (Barcelona, c. 1999), pp. 643-662), but their site does not match the literary evidence we possess for the location of Qenneshre, most notably Yāqūt's statement that it is located on the eastern shore of the Euphrates, facing Jirbās (i.e., Europos) (see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1957), p. 529). More recently, Syrian archaeologist Yusuf al-Dabte has identified a site on the eastern shore of the Euphrates, facing Jirbās, which seems to match quite well with the literary evidence we have for the monastery's location and attributes. See 'Iktishāf Dayr Qinnisrīn (Monastery of Qinnisre),' *Mahd al-Ḥaḍarāt* 2 (April, 2007), pp. 83-99. In June of 2008, I spoke with Yousef al-Dabte at the National Museum of Archaeology in Aleppo about the site of Qenneshre, which I have also visited. Al-Dabte hopes to publish additional articles based on the one season of excavation he has done there; analysis he has done on pottery found there suggests that the site was inhabited into the thirteenth century, although the literary sources referring to the monastery go silent after the tenth century.

[649] cf. *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London, 1899), pp. 208-209: 'they ordered Moro bar Kustant, the governor, who was steward of the church and he was fluent and practiced in the Greek tongue, having been educated in the monastery of St. Thomas the Apostle of Seleucia…' See also J.W. Watt, 'A Portrait of John Bar Aphtonia, Founder of the Monastery of Qenneshre,' in J. W. Drijvers and J.W. Watt, eds., *Portraits of Spiritual Authority: Religious Power in Early Christianity, Byzantium and the Christian Orient* (Leiden, 1999), pp. 158-162.

[650] cf. Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literature* (Bonn, 1922), p. 181 and Watt, 'A Portrait of John Bar Aphtonia,' p. 160. For a short Arabic play based on the life of John bar Aphtonia, see Afrām Būlus, 'Aftūnīyā,' *Al-Majalla al-Baṭrakiyya* 32 (October, 1965), pp. 82-87.

[651] In general, see Watt's, 'A Portrait of John bar Aphtonia,' pp. 155-169.

[652] In John of Ephesus' *Life* of James [=Jacob Baradaeus] and Theodore, 2 of the bishops he reports that Jacob Baradaeus ordained were Dimet of Laodecia and Sergios of Harran. See John of Ephesus, *The*

By the late sixth century, Qenneshre's importance would begin to become more and more conspicuous. In the 117 years between the consecration of Julian I as Patriarch of Antioch in 591 and the death of the Patriarch Julian II in 708, there were seven Syrian Orthodox Patriarchs of Antioch, five of whom were from the monastery of Qenneshre or who had been trained there in their youth. In the 254 years between Julian I and Dionysios of Tell Maḥre, something like 136 of them saw Patriarchs of Antioch that hailed from Qenneshre.[654]

It is significant that Bar Hebraeus notes that many of these Patriarchs learned Greek while at Qenneshre;[655] this place was synonymous with Greek education and was a training ground for almost all of the major Syrian Orthodox bishop-scholars of the seventh and eighth centuries: Thomas of Harkel,[656] Paul of Edessa,[657] Severus Sebokht,[658]

Lives of the Eastern Saints, E.W. Brooks, ed. and trans., *Patrologia Orientalis* 19 (Paris, 1926), p. 156, and cf. n. 4; cf. also E. Barsoum, 'Sīrat al-qiddis Yūḥannā ibn Aftūnīyā,' *Al-Majalla al-Baṭrakīya al-Suryānīya* 4:9 (1937), p. 273.

[653] The 'spurious' (Brooks) *Life* of Jacob Baradaeus reports that Jacob entered into the newly built monastery of Qenneshre (called in the text the monastery of Bar Aphtonia), 'for he loved it greatly on account of its virtues.' (trans. Brooks). Jacob also meets a recently baptized Arab in the monastery. For this incident, see the Syriac text and ET in Brooks, ed. and trans., *The Lives of the Eastern Saints*, *PO* 19, pp. 264-265. For this, see E. Barsoum, 'Sīrat al-qiddis Yūḥannā ibn Aftūnīyā,' *Al-Majalla al-Baṭrakīya al-Suryānīya* 4:9 (1937), p. 266.

On the inauthenticity of the 'spurious *Life*' of Jacob Baradaeus, see D.D. Bundy, 'Jacob Baradaeus. The State of Research, a Review of Sources and a New Approach,' *Le muséon* 91 (1978), pp. 51-52, 71. The incident involving Jacob at Qenneshre falls into the part of the *Life* which Bundy describes (p. 71) as a 'second series of miracle stories more spectacular and more incredible than the first.' H.G. Kleyn, *Jacobus Baradaeüs: De Stichter der Syrische Monophysietische Kerk* (Leiden, 1882) pp. 105-109, offers the classic arguments against John of Ephesus' authorship of this second, so-called 'spurious' life of Jacob Baradaeus.

[654] Julian I (591-c. 596), Athanasius I, the Camel Driver (c. 596-631), Theodore (649-667), Athanasius II, of Balad (684-687), and Julian II, the Roman (688-708). Dionysios of Tellmaḥre was Patriarch from 818-845. For this, see E. Barsoum, 'Sīrat al-qiddis Yūḥannā ibn Aftūnīyā,' *Al-Majalla al-Baṭrakīya al-Suryānīya* 4:9 (1937), p. 271. W. Hage, *Die syrisch-jacobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit. Nach orientalischen Quellen* (Wiesbaden, 1966) (table insert), has a nice list of the patriarchs of the West Syrian church in the seventh and eighth centuries.

[655] See the evidence cited below.

[656] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1, col. 267: ܒܗܢܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܡܫܬܡܗ ܗܘܐ ܬܐܘܡܐ ܚܪܩܠܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܬܪܥܝܠ. ܗܘ ܕܒܛܠܝܘܬܗ ܒܩܢܫܪܝܢ ܐܬܪܕܝ، ܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ... 'In this time, Thomas of Harkel was eminent, who was from the Monastery of Tar'īl who, in his youth was trained in the Greek language in Qenneshre...'

[657] A good circumstantial case can be made which associates Paul with Qenneshre. BL Add. 17,134, quite possibly written in the hand of Jacob of Edessa himself and dated AD 675, contains a note

stating that the *Gloria in excelsis* of Athanasios of Alexandria, was translated by Paul according to the tradition of Qenneshre (see W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (London, 1870) p. 336: ܬܘܒ ܬܫܒܘܚܬܐ ܕܡܬܐܡܪܐ ܒܟܠܗܝܢ ܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܕܡܕ̈ܝܢܬܐ ܕܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܗܘ ܐ ܡܢ ܩܕ̈ܡܝܐ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ. ܒܬܪ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕ ܨܦܪܐ. ܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܩܢܫܪܐ ܒܬܪ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܠܠܝܐ. ܕܐܦܩܗ ܐܦ ܗܝ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܐ ܠܗ ܚܣܝܐ ܡܪܝ, ܦܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܫܪܐ ‘Again: the hymn which is said in all the churches of the cities of the Christians from ancient times, after the early-morning service, but in the monastery of Qenneshre, after the night service, which was translated from Greek to Syriac by the venerable Mar Paul according to the tradition of Qenneshre; also cp. with the note in Bodleian (Poc.) 10, in R. Payne Smith, *Catalogi Codicum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Bodleianae* (Oxford, 1864), col. 64: ܬܫܒ̄ܘ ܕܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܕܡܬܐܡܪܐ ܒܠܠܝܐ ܕܚܕ ܒܫܒܐ ܘܒܥܐ̈ܕܐ ܡܪ̈ܢܝܐ ܡܦܩܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܐ ܠܚܣܝܐ ܡܪܝ ܦܘܠܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ, ܗܘ ܕܦܩܗ ܠܡܥ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܩܢܫܪܝܢ ܢ̄ ܩܢܫܪܐ ‘The hymn of Athanasios the Bishop of Alexandria which is said on Sunday nights and dominical feasts. It was translated from Greek into Syriac by the venerable Mar Paul, the Bishop of Edessa, who translated the chants according to the tradition of Qenneshrin ([another] manuscript [reads] “Qenneshre.”’) The *Chronicle to 724* (E.W. Brooks, ed., *Chronica Minora II* (CSCO SS Series Tertia 4) (Paris, 1904) p. 147, ET in A. Palmer, S.P. Brock and R. Hoyland, *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), p. 18) notes that in 623, the Slavs invaded Crete and other islands and some 20 monks from Qenneshre were killed (ܘܒܫܢܬ ܬ̈ܫܥܡܐܐ ܘܬܠܬܝܢ ܘܐܪܒܥ. ܥܠܘ ܐܣܩܠܒܢܐ ܠܩܪܛܐ ܘܠܓܙܪ̈ܬܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ. ܘܬܡܢ ܐܬܐܚܕܘܢ ܠܛܘܒ̈ܢܐ ܕܩܢܫܪܐ. ܘܐܬܩܛܠܘ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܥܣܪܝܢ ܓܒܪ̈ܝܢ܀ ‘In the year 934 [of the Greeks], the Slavs entered Crete and other islands and there the blessed ones of Qenneshre were seized and some twenty of them were killed’ (my translation)). We further know that Paul was on Cyprus in 624 (see BL Add. 12,153, fol. 1b, in W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London, 1871) p. 423: ܩ̈ܦܠܐܐ ܕܦܠܓܘܬܐ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܠܒܝܫ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ. ܬܐܘܠܘܓܘܣ܆ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܢܙܝܢܙܘܣ: ܕܐܦܩܗ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܣܘܪܝܐ ܚܣܝܐ ܘܡܝܩܪ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܒܘܢ ܡܪܝ, ܦܘܠܐ. ܒܩܘܦܪܘܣ ܓܙܪܬܐ. ܒܫܢܬ ܬ̈ܫܥܡܐܐ ܘܬܠܬܝܢ ܘܚܡܫ... ‘The headings of the first volume of the holy and God-bearing Gregory the Theologian, the Bishop of Nazianzus, which the venerable and God-honored Abbas Mar Paul translated from Greek to Syriac on the Island of Cyprus in the year 935 [of the Greeks = AD 624]...’) in flight from the Persians (as reported by Jacob of Edessa in a note in BL Add. 17,134; see Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1, p. 336: ...ܐܬܦܫܩܘ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܒܪܬ ܩܠܐ ܐܘܪܗܝܬܐ ܐܘܟܝܬ ܣܘܪܝܝܬܐ. ܠܚܣܝܐ ܡܪܝ, ܦܘܠܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ, ܡܕܝܢܬܐ: ܟܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ, ܒܩܘܦܪܘܣ ܓܙܪܬܐ܆ ܒܥܪܘܩܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܪ̈ܣܝܐ. ‘They were translated from the Greek language into Edessene vernacular, that is Syriac, by the venerable Mar Paul who was bishop of the city of Edessa, when he was in Cyprus, in flight from the Persians.’ See also this entire note and its translation in E.W. Brooks, *The Hymns of Severus and Others in the Syriac Version of Paul of Edessa as Revised by James of Edessa* in R. Graffin and F. Nau, edd., *Patrologia Orientalis* vol. 7, (Paris, 1911), pp. 801-802. (cf. n. 323, above). For many of these points and for the Paul of Edessa-Qenneshre connection see S.P. Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 29 and Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 190.

[658] Severos was ‘Bishop of Qenneshrin,’ (cf. e.g., Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol.1, col. 275: ܘܒܗ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܡܬܝܕܥ ܗܘܐ ܒܝܘ̈ܠܦܢܐ ܡܠ̈ܝܠܝܐ ܘܡܬܐܡ̈ܛܝܩܝܐ ܘܥܕ̈ܬܢܝܐ ܣܐܘܝܪܐ ܣܐܒܘܟܬ ܐܦܝܣܩ̄ ܕܩܢܫܪܝܢ... ‘At that time, Severos Sebokht, the Bishop of Qenneshrin, was illustrious in logical and mathematical and ecclesiastical areas of scholarship’) which may refer to the city of Chalcis or which may refer to the monastery of Qenneshre (though I am unaware of any other mention of a bishop over the monastery which, as pointed out above, n. 519, the *Life* of Theodota of Amid indicates served as the home of the Miaphysite Patriarch in the seventh century. Nevertheless, we also know that Severos Sebokht was a teacher of Athanasios of Balad, who is said to have studied Greek at Qenneshre in his youth (see Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1, col. 287 and n. 809, below.) cf. also Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 246, esp. n. 5.

Athanasius of Balad,[659] Jacob of Edessa,[660] and George, Bishop of the Arabs[661] are among the luminaries whom we know or strongly suspect studied there.

It was scholars trained at Qenneshre who were responsible for much of the Syriac-language intellectual activity that characterized the seventh century, especially in the Miaphysite church, scholarship which contrasts so sharply with the story of Greek all over the eastern Mediterranean in the same period. Moreover, it was scholars trained at Qenneshre who were at the forefront of the hellenization of the Syriac language. Brock cited George of the Arabs' use of *l-meḥdā*—a calque on the Greek χαίρειν—rather than the more traditional *shlām*, as a greeting in his letters as indicative of the 'all pervasive' influence of Greek on Syriac by the seventh century.[662] What is interesting to note, however, is that usage of the Syriac equivalent of χαίρειν, χαῖρε or χαίρετε, seems to have been strongly characteristic of writers and translators who were associated with Qenneshre in the seventh century, perhaps exclusively so. Thus, while the seventh-century Nestorian Isho'yahb III used the traditional *shlām* as a greeting in

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[659] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, col. 287: ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܡܪܝ، ܐܬܐܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܕܒܠܕ. ܗܘ ܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܩܕ̈. ܬܠܡܝܕܗ ܕܣܐܘܝܪܐ ܣܒܘܟܬ. ܕܒܛܠܝܘܬܗ ܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܢܫܪܝܢ ܐܬܪܕܝ، ܘܐܬܛܒܥ، ܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ. 'Mar Athanasios who is called 'of Balad' was ordained Patriarch, who is an exegete of the Holy Scriptures, a student of Severos Sebokht who, in his youth, was trained and studied intensely the Greek language in the monastery of Qenneshre…'

[660] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, col. 290: ܘܒܗ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܡܬܝܕܥ ܗܘܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ، ܡܛܠ ܕܒܬܪܟܢ ܐܬܬܣܝܡ ܗܘܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܠܗ̇ ܠܐܘܪܗܝ، ܡܢܗ ܕܗܢܐ ܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܒܪ ܢܨܚܢܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܡܢ ܥܝܢܕܒܐ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܒܐܬܪܐ ܕ ܓܘܡܝܗ ܕܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܘܐ. ܘܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܐܦܬܘܢܝܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܩܢܫܪܝܢ. ܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ ܝܠܦ… 'At the time, Jacob who is called "of Edessa" was well-known, for afterwards he was ordained bishop of Edessa by this Patriarch Athanasios. Indeed, this venerable Jacob was from the village of 'Ayndābā which is in the district of Gūma which is in the territory of Antioch, and in the monastery of Aphtonia, which is Qenneshre, he learned the Greek language and the precise reading of the scriptures…'

[661] K. McVey, *George Bishop of the Arabs: a Homily on Blessed Mar Severus, Patriarch of Antioch* (CSCO 531: SS 217) pp. XXII-XXVII, makes a strong circumstantial case that George spent time at Qenneshre. See further my comments in 'Between Christology and *Kalām*? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes,' in G. Kiraz, ed., *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock* (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), pp. 674-677.

[662] See S.P. Brock, 'From Antagonism to Assimilation: Syriac Attitudes to Greek Learning,' in N. Garsoian, T. Matthews and R. Thomson, eds., *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, DC, 1982), p. 29 (repr. in *idem*., *Syriac Perspectives on Late Antiquity* (Ashgate, 1984), ch. V).

his letters,[663] Athanasios I Gamolo,[664] Severos Sebokht,[665] Athanasios of Balad[666] and Jacob of Edessa[667]—all of whom, like George of the Arabs, were associated with Qenneshre—would use *l-meḥdā*, *ḥdī* or *ḥdaw* as the salutation in their letters. In addition to his letters, Jacob of Edessa would use *l-meḥdā* in his translations from Greek.[668] Thomas of Harkel, another product of Qenneshre, would use the more literal *ḥdī* or *ḥdāyen* or *l-meḥdā* in his translation of the New Testament to represent χαῖρε, χαίρετε or

[663] See, e.g., R. Duval, ed., *Išōʿyahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO: SS 2, 64) (Paris, 1904), pp. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, etc.

[664] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 392 (Syriac) = vol. 2, pp. 381-382 (FT): ܠܝܩܝܪܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ. ܐܚܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ. ܘܫܘܐ ܢܦܫܐ. ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܡܪܝ ܩܘܪܝܩܘܣ. ܐܬܐܢܣܝܘܣ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܚܕܝ. 'To the venerable and holy spiritual brother, who has a worthy soul: Bishop Mar Kyriakos. [From] the lowly Athanasios: rejoice in the Lord!'; also see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 400 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 394 (FT): ܠܝܩܝܪܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ. ܐܚܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ. ܘܫܘܝ ܢܦܫܐ. ܘܫܘܬܦܝ ܦܘܠܚܢܐ. ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܒܡܕܢܚܐ. ܐܬܐܢܣܝܘܣ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܚܕܘ 'To the venerable and holy spiritual brothers, like-minded, co-workers, all Bishops in the East: [from] the lowly Athanasios, Rejoice in the Lord!'; *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 411 (Syriac) = vol. 2, pp. 414-415 (FT): ܠܓܢܝܣܐ ܘܪܚܡܝ ܐܠܗܐ. ܒܢܝܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ ܡܪܝ ܡܬܝ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܪܝܫܕܝܪܐ. ܘܫܪܟܐ ܕܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܡܫܡܫܢܐ. ܘܐܚܘܬܐ ܟܠܗ ܕܒܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܒܕܝܪܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܡܬܝ. ܐܬܐܢܣܝܘܣ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܒܝܫܘܥ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠ ܟܠ. ܚܕܘ.. 'To our noble and God-loving spiritual children, Mar Mattai, priest and abbot, and the rest of the priests and deacons and all the brotherhood in Christ which is in the Monastery of Mar Mattai: [from] the lowly Athanasios. Rejoice in Jesus, [who is] God over all!'. NB: Michael the Syrian preserves a letter written by Anastasios, the Patriarch of Antioch, to Athanasios I Gamolo, in which *l-meḥdā* is used; this letter must be a translation of a Greek original. See *ibid.*, vol. 4, p. 400 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 394 (FT): ܠܡܪܝܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܕܒܟܠܡܕܡ ܝܩܝܪܐ ܘܩܕܝܫܐ. ܐܚܐ ܘܒܪ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܐܬܐܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ. ܐܢܣܛܣܝܘܣ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܠܡܚܕܐ.. 'To my Lord who is venerable and holy in everything, brother and co-worker Athanasios, the Patriarch of Antioch. [From] Anastasios, the Patriarch of Alexandria. Rejoice in the Lord!'

[665] See Cambridge Add. 2812, fol. 109a: ܠܪܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܕܚܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܚܘܢ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ ܘܚܒܝܒ ܝܬܝܪ: ܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܦܪܝܕܘܛܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܘܢܢ ܫܠܡ. ܣܘܝܪܐ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܚܕܝ.... 'To our God-loving and God-fearing spiritual brother, the especially beloved priest and periodeute Yonan: peace. [From] the lowly Severos: Rejoice in the Lord!' Note that Severos uses both the traditional *shlām* as well as *ḥdī*, a calque on the Greek χαῖρε

[666] See F. Nau, 'Littérature canonique syriaque inédite,' p. 128: ܠܡܝܬܪܐ ܘܪܚܡܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܢܝܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ ܘܚܒܝܒܐ ܕܝܢ ܟܘܪܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܘܦܪܝܕܘܛܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܒܟܠܕܘܟ ܐܬܐܢܣܝܘܣ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܚܕܘ. 'To the excellent and God-loving spiritual children and beloved chorepiscopi and believing periodeutes who are in every place: [from] the lowly Athanasios, Rejoice in the Lord!'

[667] For Jacob's use of *l-meḥdā*, see e.g., BL Add. 12,172, fol. 81b (letter 3, to John the Priest); fol. 83a (letter 4, to George the Deacon); fol. 85a, (letter 5, to John the Stylite); fol. 97b, (letter 9, to John the Stylite); fol. 99a, (letter 10, to John the Stylite). Also see BL Add. 17,168, fol. 154a (letter to Simeon the Stylite).

[668] Jacob translated the acts of the Synod of Carthage of 256 from Greek into Syriac in the year 687 (for Jacob as the translator of this work, see Baumstark *Geschichte*, p. 252; for the Greek-Syriac translation taking place in the year AD 687/AG 998 see, the Syriac colophon in P. de Lagarde, *Reliquiae iuris ecclesiastici antiquissimae*, (repr. Osnabrück/Wiesbaden, 1967), p. ܢܚ); these acts contain two letters of Cyprian which use *l-meḥdā* in their greeting. See pp. ܣܚ, ܢܠ. For this first citation, cf. C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 2nd ed., (Halle, 1928), s.v. ܚܕܝ

χαίρειν.[669] Other occurrences of this turn of phrase are also possibly connected with persons trained at Qenneshre. Athanasios of Nisibis was active in the middle of the seventh century and may or may not have been the same person as Athanasios of Balad;[670] he, too, used this peculiar calque in his translation of the *Sixth Book of the Select Letters* of Severos of Antioch.[671] The anonymous translator of Epiphanios' *Treatise on Weights and Measures* also employed this calque;[672] as this work contains much that would be of interest to students of the Bible and also to those interested in Biblical translation and the history of Biblical translation, it is not hard to imagine that it may have been translated by someone associated with an important center of studies like Qenneshre, possibly for use by students there.[673]

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[669] See Mt. 26:49 where the Harklean *ḥdī* replaces the *shlām* of the Sinaiticus and Peshitta to represent the Greek χαῖρε; Mt. 27:29, where the Harklean has *ḥdī* rather than the Sinaticus *shlām lākh* and the Peshitta *shlām* for the Greek χαῖρε; Mt. 28:9, where *ḥdāyen* replaces the Peshitta's *shlām lken* for the Greek χαίρετε; Lk. 1:28 where *ḥdī* replaces the Peshitta's *shlām lekh(ī)* for the Greek χαῖρε; Mark 15:18, where the Harklean has *ḥdī* instead of the Sinaiticus and Peshitta's *shlām* for the Greek χαῖρε; John 19:3, where the Harklean *ḥdī* replaces the Peshitta *shlām lākh* for the Greek χαῖρε; Acts 15:23, Acts 23:26 and James 1:1 where *l-meḥdā* replaces the Peshitta's *shlām* for the Greek χαίρειν.

[670] He produced a literal version of the *Sixth Book of the Select Letters* of Severos of Antioch in AD 669. See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 259 and n. 299, above. The evidence about the identity of Athanasios of Nisibis is too scanty to make a strong argument either for or against his being the same person as Athanasios II of Balad.

[671] See E.W. Brooks, ed. and trans., *The Sixth Book of the Select Letters of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch. In the Syriac Version of Athanasius of Nisibis*, vol. I, part I, (London, 1902), p. 167: ܠܝܩܝܪܐ ܘܪܚܡܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܚܐ ܘܫܘܬܦܝ ܒܬܫܡܫܬܐ: ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܬܚܝܬ ܟܘܪܣܝܐ ܫܠܝܚܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ: ܘܡܬܬܒܝܢ ܗܫܐ ܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܪܒܬܐ ܘܪܚܡܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܝ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܝܐ: ܩܣܝܢܐ ܘܩܘܣܛܢܛܝܢܐ ܘܐܢܛܘܢܝܢܐ ܘܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܪܟܐ. ܣܘܝܪܐ ܒܡܪܝܐ ܠܡܚܕܐ ܀ 'To the venerable and God-loving, brothers and co-ministers, the Bishops who are under the Apostolic see which is of the Antiochenes and who are now seated in the great and Christ-loving city of the Alexandrians: Cassian and Constantine and Antoninus and the rest: [from] Severos: Greetings in the Lord.' (my translation). For this citation, see C. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, 2nd ed., (Halle, 1928), s.v. ܚܕܝ.

[672] See J.E. Dean, ed. and trans., *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures: The Syriac Version* (Chicago, 1935), p. 93 (52d): ܡܠܟܐ ܦܛܠܡܐܘܣ. ܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܒܐܘܪܫܠܡ ܣܓܝܐܬ ܚܕܘ. 'Ptolemy the King: To the teachers of the Jews who are in Jerusalem: Greetings [in] many things.' (my translation).

[673] Alternately, it could have been executed at a monastery like Qarqapta home of the West Syrian masoretic tradition. See Baumstark, *Geschichte,* pp. 259-260.

Why a Seventh-Century Renaissance?

Everything I have stated up until this point has been an attempt at setting the stage for trying to understand why Syriac should flourish in the seventh century and why there should be such a flurry of translations and re-translations at this moment. A partial answer to this question lies in the image of the religious landscape of Umayyad society I have tried to sketch out here. The twin factors of diversity and competition—a diversity of Christian confessional factions and intense competition between them for adherents—created an environment which encouraged the need to marginally differentiate and separate one group from another as they tried to woo 'the simple people' that the *Life* of Marūthā and Jacob both referred to. The drive to win converts, to protect turf and to defend one's position in such a fluid and unstable environment was one of the factors fueling the production of texts. Translations, philosophical and otherwise, into Syriac blossom in the seventh century because the situation 'on the ground' meant that if one was going to defend and promote one's position ably amid low-level inter-confessional sniping, one had to be dialectically well-equipped.[674] Much the same seems to have been the case at the end of the eighth century. 'As for that young man who was asking for explanations of the *Categories* from you,' the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I wrote to Sergios of Elam, 'by all means, send him to us, for he will certainly be useful to us.'[675] Students of Aristotle provided soldiers for a church hierarchy concerned with ecclesiastical self-defense and offense. Perhaps referring to

[674] cf. R. Gottheil's comments in 'The Syriac Versions of the Categories of Aristotle,' *Hebraica* 9 (1893), p. 166.

[675] *Letter 21*. See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), p. 132: ...ܘܥܠܝܡܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܥܐ ܗܘܐ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܩܛܝܓܘܪܝܐܣ ܡܢ ܠܘܬܟ، ܫܕܪܝܗܝ ܠܘܬܢ ܒܟܠ ܦܘܪܣ: ܗܘ ܓܝܪ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܠܢ ܕܠܘܬ ܡܥܕܪܢܘܬܢ LT in *idem*., trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 88. Bidawid dates *Letter 21* to the period 799-804; see *idem*., *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 75.

the same young man, Timothy would write to Sergios in another letter, ‘Send me that young man who is a logician.’ Here a soldier was about to be made into a general: ‘Perhaps I will make him Metropolitan of Harew, for there are followers of Severos there.’[676]

The ‘surprising vitality of Greek culture in Palestine-Syria in the 8th century’ which Mango wrote about—it was Palestine and not Constantinople or some other place that was the ‘most active centre of Greek culture in the 8th century’[677]—suggests that the effects of such a diverse and contentious religious landscape were felt regardless of linguistic boundaries. It is the presence of large numbers of Christians from rival and vibrant competing confessional groups that differentiates Syria and the Middle East more broadly from contemporary Anatolia, Egypt and the Balkans; this is perhaps the most important factor in explaining why a Dark Age never occurred there. Keeping Greek-speaking ecclesiastical competitors in mind also highlights another factor driving Syriac translations and re-translations: the need to have reliable Syriac versions of the same theological and philosophical resources available to Greek-speaking rivals. Bilingualism and the easy transit of texts across languages meant that Syriac-speaking Christians needed to both catch-up to and keep-up with opponents.[678]

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[676] *Letter 25*. See O. Braun, ed. *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 141-142: ܫܕܪ ܠܝ ܠܛܠܝܐ ܗܘ ܠܗ ܠܘܓܝܩܘܣ. ܟܒܪ ܓܒܪ. ܐܦܢ ܠܗ ܡܛܪܦܘܠܝܛܐ ܠܗܪܘܐ. ܐܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܬܡܢ ܣܐܘܝܪܝܢܐ Bidawid dates this letter to the period AD 799-804; see *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 75 and also cf. p. 27.

[677] See C. Mango, ‘Greek Culture in Palestine after the Arab Conquest,’ in G. Cavallo, G. de Gregorio, and M. Maniaci, eds., *Scritture, Libri e Testi nelle Aree Provinciali di Bisanzio*, vol. 1, (Spoleto, 1991), pp. 159, 149. Somewhat similarly, see R.P. Blake, ‘La littérature grecque en Palestine au VIII^{e} siècle,’ *Le Muséon* 78 (1965), pp. 367-380.

[678] For examples of polemical theological texts crossing linguistic boundaries, see my ‘Between Christology and Kalām? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes,’ in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone: Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), pp. 671-716.

Chapter 6: Power on Heaven and Earth

A member of the theological elite in the seventh century, one with a strong sense of doctrinal right and wrong, who looked out on the Christian landscape before him would have had plenty of reason for consternation and anger. Things were a mess. Confronted with such a situation and having a desire to bring some order and correctness to the untidiness which existed, what tools did such a person have available to try to remedy things?

The purpose of this chapter will be to suggest ways in which Jacob of Edessa, and other leaders like him, might be able to enforce obedience and bring other Christians into line with their views. To get an idea of just which measures Jacob would have had recourse to, I will make extensive use of more of his canons. These reveal a world in which Christians were engaging in a number of exotic and strange practices; indeed, we have just gotten a healthy dose of such strange fruit and are about consume much more. Before we set foot into this world, therefore, several cautions should be issued.

First, there is the question of the use of normative sources. It may be objected that something like canon law cannot (or should not) be used to reconstruct activities on the ground in the seventh century. Such an objection could perhaps gain traction against some forms of canon law; it will not do, however, in the case of Jacob. Previously, I attempted to show that Jacob was a person who took the enforcement of canons extremely seriously, so seriously that he quit his job in face of the chaos of non-compliance which confronted him. There is a direct connection between Jacob the grammarian who was the first to attempt codification of rules for the Syriac language,

Jacob the author who wrote a treatise rebuking scribes for being sloppy and a lack of punctiliousness in copying out his works, Jacob the bishop confronting the patriarch over the non-enforcement of the canons, Jacob the embittered ex-bishop who burned the book of canon law and Jacob the correspondent who took his time replying to canonical questions because, as he lamented (with a touch of self-pity), no one observed the canons. Here was a man who liked rules and who wanted them to be followed. However unpleasant that may have made him to his contemporaries, Jacob's strong sense for the importance of rules and their enforcement has left a rich seam of gold in the form of his canonical judgements; these can be mined with great profit by the historian interested in the seventh century. It should also be pointed out that what we call Jacob's canons are not exactly canons in the sense that that word might normally be used; what they are, in fact, are answers to questions written to him by other Christians. In other words, they are responses to actual, real-life situations and incidents.

This brings us to my second caution: precisely for this reason, we must resist the temptation to view Jacob's canons as ethnographic reports of bizarre and abnormal practices unique to certain parts of Syria in a particular period. We are not dealing with a singularity. Just as I have suggested that orthodoxy (of whichever flavor) was a minority view, I would like to suggest that the sort of behaviors Jacob's canons describe were utterly normal and quite widespread, not only during his life time, but also before it and also after.[679] Frank Trombley, for example, has attempted to squeeze the (much

[679] See, for example, the large amount of Greek and Latin material mostly from the patristic era on Christians and divination/prognostication assembled by Joseph Bingham in his *Origines ecclesiasticæ: or, The antiquities of the Christian church, and other works, of the Rev. Joseph Bingham ; with a set of maps of ecclesiastical geography, to which are now added, several sermons, and other matter, never before published*

less vivid) canons of the Quinisext Council (691-692), written perhaps exactly when Jacob was carrying out his correspondence, for information about pagan survivals among Christians in the Byzantine empire:[680] what one sees only darkly in the canons of the Quinisext, one can see in full in the canons of Jacob. In writing his responses to questions which he had been sent, Jacob was playing the familiar role of an authority figure responding in expected ways to practices which had been around for a long time. This was a dance of consultation and opinion-issuing whose steps were written centuries before.[681] What is unique, perhaps, about Jacob and his questions and answers is the extraordinary vividness and detail they provide us.

With these caveats in mind, let us now turn our attention to the tools Jacob had available for remedying the disorder which confronted him.

This is My Body

Strategies for distinguishing one Christian group from another can take on a number of different forms: doctrinal, liturgical, creedal, among others. An inescapable reality, however, was that the creation of a separate church, in the sociological sense, in the real physical world, and not just the doctrinal sense 'on paper,' required both institutions and manpower. It required institutions for training manpower. The question is: how could one win hearts and minds in the seventh century and then keep them won?

; the whole revised and edited, together with a biographical account of the author by his great grandson, Richard Bingham, vol. 6 (London, 1834), pp. 213-240, and see the catalog of evidence Bingham brings together on Christians associating with Jews and Jewish practices, along with interactions between Christians and pagans and Christians and Christian heretics, in *ibid*., pp. 240-277.

[680] See F. Trombley, 'The Council in Trullo (691-692): A Study in the Canons Relating to Paganism, Heresy, and the Invasions,' *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 9 (1978), pp. 1-18. This article and the work by Bingham were brought to my attention by an email sent by John Lamoreaux to the North American Society for Christian Arabic Studies listserv.

[681] I am grateful to Peter Brown for the ideas in this paragraph.

Jacob had no state to enforce his vision of Christian orthodoxy. What he did have was words—he could tar someone with pejorative labels: 'Jew,'[682] 'Pagan,'[683] 'Heretic,'[684] 'Strangers to the Church,'[685] 'Arab,'[686] if that person deviated from Jacob's norm and ideal. More importantly, he also had the Mysteries. He could punish someone ecclesiastically, most dramatically by cutting that person off from the Eucharist, something he frequently prescribes as a course of action in his canons.[687]

Cutting a person off from the Eucharist was no small thing, either, for this is a world where a major source of religious authority was power—not political, but spiritual. At the base of and driving the spiritual economy of the seventh century were very concrete, real-life human concerns: anxiety over personal and familial health, worry about crops and cattle, apprehension for the safety of travelers, a need for the forgiveness of sins. In the face of forces beyond its control, human finitude reached out

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[682] cf. e.g., Mardin 310, fol. 210a, where he criticizes Christians following 'Jewish observances.' See also, e.g., Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 3: ܠܐ ܕܗ [ܙܕܩ] ܠܟܪ̈ܝܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܢܛܪܘܢ ܢܛܘܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܝܗ̈ܘܕܝܬܐ. ܐܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܣܟ̈ܠܐ ܘܠܐ ܪ̈ܕܝܐ ܕܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܘܫܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܟܪܐ ܐܪ̈ܒܥܝܢ ܝܘ̈ܡܬܐ ܟܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ. ܘܠܗ̇ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܢܩܒܬܐ ܬܡܢܐܝܢ ܝܘ̈ܡܝܢ. ܘܗܕܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܦܓܪܢܐܝܬ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܘܝܗܘܕܐܝܬ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܠܡܛܪ ܕܟܝܘܬܐ. ܐܘ ܠܡܥܪܩ ܡܢ ܛܡܐܘܬܐ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܣܘܟܠܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ. ܠܐ ܠܚܝܬܐ ܕܡܝܠܕܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܟܠܐ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܐܦ ܝܘܡܐ ܚܕ. ܐܦܠܐ ܠܗ̇ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܡܚܕܐ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܡܢ ܥܪܣܗ̇ ܘܡܣܚܝܐ ܢܦܫܗ̇. 'Christians should not keep Jewish observances. For there are foolish and untrained priests who follow the old law, that of Moses, of keeping a male child out of the church for forty days and a female child eighty days. This they do knowing only how to keep purity or flee pollution in a fleshly and Jewish manner. Those, however, who have a spiritual understanding, know that a midwife should not be kept back from the church even one day, nor should she who gives birth—as soon as she rises from her bed and washes herself.

[683] See Mardin 310, fol. 208b: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܢܣܓܘܢ ܨܠܘ̈ܬܐ ܩܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ ܢܓܪܘܢ ܥܠ ܒܣ̈ܡܐ: ܘܢܘܪܟܘܢ ܨ̈ܠܘܬܐ ܘܢܦܩܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܚܢ̈ܦܐ: ܟܕ ܩܝܡܝܢ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܡܠܬܗ ܕܡܪܢ. ܐܠܐ ܣܦܩ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܕܢܐܡܪܘܢ. ܨ̈ܠܘܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܟܝܟܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܒܢܝܢܐ ܕܥܡܐ 'Priests should not say many prayers with incense and draw out and produce prayers like the pagans, standing in opposition to the statement of Our Lord [cf. Matthew 6:7]. Instead, it is enough for them that they say one modest prayer for the edification of the people.' Also see Mardin 310 fol., 212a (on divination practices, see n. 614, above.)

[684] See Mardin 310, fol. 203a. (those who baptize the *nāqūshā* are heretics and strangers to the church).

[685] See Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 146.

[686] See Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, pp. 3-4, on the Armenians (cf. n. 597, above)

[687] See, e.g., Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 108, 136, 142, 148; Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 21; Mardin 310, fol. 202b.

to spiritual authorities for help in coping with the material uncertainties and challenges of life. The *Life* of Theodota of Amid ends with the prayer of Theodota, reportedly spoken at the end of his life in AD 698, for those who would come to visit the place of his death after he had passed away. Theodota's prayer gives us a vivid picture of the human needs and worries which seventh-century religious systems had to provide means of effectively confronting and dealing with if they were to maintain their plausibility and appeal. 'Grant that person, my Lord,' Theodota asked, on behalf of future pilgrims to his shrine,

> mercies and the forgiveness of sins. And keep his family and his possessions and his crops.
>
> O Lord God, do not hold back this request which I ask of you: that everyone over whom losses arise, or for whom disease falls upon his beasts, or for whom there is illness in his flock or among his bulls or in whatever he possesses, and who then makes a vow and comes in Your name and the name of Your Mother and Your saints and in the name of my frailty makes a vigil, at that point, You, O Lord, cause to pass from his household every chastising rod which is coming against it and cover everything he owns with Your mercy. Bless his possessions that he might thank You, since You have answered him.
>
> O Lord, Our Lord, do for me this favor: that everyone who has a fever or the shivers or who has a throbbing head, and who comes into the presence of Your saints and who makes a vigil and who prays in Your name and in my name: Grant him that he goes away sound and rejoicing.
>
> Yes, O God! My Lord, grant me this request which I have asked from Your mercy and grant, O Lord, that I be mighty against the demons and after my departure from here, drive away the evil spirits from all those who are sealed with the sign of Your cross. And as for everyone who has a demon and calls Your holy name and my name, cleanse him, O Lord, and let him go away from my body parts set free from servitude to Satan.
>
> O Lord, it is in You that I have sought refuge. Grant me what I have asked of You, that every household or village or region may offer a Eucharist for Your holy name and for mine. Hold back from them hail and locusts and worms and blight and heat and disease and every kind of wrath, unto the ages. Amen.
>
> Yes, O Lord God, do this favor for me: that everyone who goes out into a foreign land and everyone who travels in the road and is violently attacked and falls into the hands of robbers, or over whom waves rise in the sea or who is thrown in jail and who makes a vow and who comes and makes a vigil in Your name and in the name of the saints who are placed here in my contemptible

> name: Grant him his request, whatever he asks of You, and give him refuge in Your abundant mercy.[688]

Jacob's canons make clear that having control over the Eucharist and church ritual gave priests enormous power to affect and deal with precisely the sorts of worries and trials which Theodota spoke about in his prayer. The state only had the power to kill the body, but a Christian priest, armed with the sacraments, had power to both heal the body and deliver it from hell. In other words, without the power of the state to enforce his beliefs, Jacob still had considerable ability to control the behavior of the Christian laity, so long as he maintained authority over the administration of the Eucharist.

Many of the aberrant practices I described above—things like proclaiming a young virgin the mother of a locust or making the walls of a home out of bull dung—had as their object dealing with precisely the sorts of problems outlined in Theodota's prayer. Though the practices I mentioned were undertaken by Christians, they did not necessarily employ Christian symbols. The Eucharist and other channels of the sacred available to the Christian clergy, however, provided a rich field of possibilities for combating precisely the same sorts of afflictions with explicitly Christian resources. And unsurprisingly, we can see from Jacob's canons that the Eucharist and other Christian means of mediating the sacred were being employed in a number of different settings as a tool to combat undesirable realities.

The Eucharist in particular had a talismanic, apotropaic power. People were taking its elements and tying them up into knots to use as amulets. They wore them on their bodies like phylacteries; they even wore the Eucharistic elements around their necks along with the cross or with the bones of saints. For protection, they would place

[688] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fols. 562a-562b (sections 232-237 in my edition).

the sacred elements in beds, in the walls of houses, in vineyards, in gardens and other places for physical protection. This was not just the practice of a supposedly superstitious and ignorant laity, either. Jacob made provisions for the punishment of both clergy and lay people who would engage in such practices; in both instances, people who did such things were to be held back from communion for a period of at least three years.[689] Eucharists were being celebrated on mountains, in vineyards and

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[689] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 106, 108 (italics indicate my correction of the text): ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܠܟܠ
ܡܢ ܕܫܐܠ ܡܢܬܐ ܡܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܐܙܠ [ܕܬܐܙܠ] ܥܡܗ ܠܒܝܬܗ. ܕܬܬܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܕܠܐ ܒܘܚܢܐ. ܘܟܕ ܠܐ ܝܕܝܥ ܗܘ
ܕܡܬܦܠܓܝܢ ܠܗ ܗܢܘܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ. ܘܐܢ ܦܐܐ ܕܐܦ ܒܝܕ ܥܠܡܝܐ ܢܬܦܠܓܘܢ ܐܘ ܒܝܕ ܐܢܬܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܒܗ
ܕܐܫܬܟܚܘ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܢܣܒܝܢ ܦܬܬܐ ܡܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ. ܘܟܕ ܚܛܝܢ ܘܩܛܪܝܢ ܩܛܪܐ ܐܝܟ ܙܪܐ ܐܘ ܬܠܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ
ܐܝܟ ܦܠܩܛܪܝܐ. ܐܘ ܣܡܝܢ ܒܥܪܣܬܗܘܢ ܘܒܐܣܬܐ ܕܒܬܝܗܘܢ ܨܒܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܠܦ. ܐܢ ܦܠܐ [ܦܐܐ] ܕܗܠܝܢ
ܢܗܘܝܢ: ܐܘ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܦܐܐ. ܡܢܐ ܡܫܘܡ ܦܘܪܥܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܩܒܠܘܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܥܒܕܝܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܡܛܠ
ܕܡܬܡܪܚܐ ܗܕܐ ܐܬܬܡܪܚܫܬ ܙܕܩ ܕܒܒܘܚܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ [ܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ] ܗܢܘܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ.
ܘܟܕ ܩܕܡ ܝܕܝܥ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܠܡܢ ܡܬܦܠܓܝܢ. ܐܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܕܐ ܠܐ ܐܫܬܡܥܬ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܠܦܘܪܗ [ܠܚܦܘܪܗ] ܐܠܝܢ ܐ ܗܘܬ
ܥܠ ܒܘܚܢܐ ܚܬܝܬܐ ܕܟܠܗ [ܟܠܗ] ܗܢܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܨܝܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܐܝܬ ܕܗܕܐ ܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܩܠܝܪܘܣ ܒܟܢܘܫܝܐ
ܥܡܝܩܐ ܕܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܐܘ ܕܟܠܗ ܗܢܐ ܢܒܚܢܘܢ ܘܢܒܨܘܢ ܐܘ ܗܢܘܢ ܢܐܙܠܘܢ ܘܢܫܠܡܘܢ
ܩܘܕܫܐ. ܐܘ ܠܟܪܝܗܐ ܐܘ ܠܐܚܪܢܐ [ܠܐܚܪܢܐ] ܕܣܢܝܩܝܢ ܠܗ ܗܕܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ. ܠܐ ܚܣܕܐ ܘܠܐ ܟܠܝܐ ܗܝ ܕܟܕ
ܥܠܡܝܐ ܕܕܚܠܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܢܬܦܠܓܘܢ ܐܘ ܒܝܕ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܢܟܦܬܐ. ܐܠܘ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܡܨܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ.
ܗܢܘܢ ܩܠܝܪܘܣ ܙܕܩ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܫܠܡܘܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܠܟܠ ܐܢܫ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܪܚܘ ܗܕܐ ܗܝ ܡܥܒܕ ܐܡܪܝܢ ܥܠ
ܩܘܕܫܐ ܡܟܪܙܐ ܕܦܩܕܐ ܘܕܡܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܠܗܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܢܫ ܒܢ ܒܬܪ ܡܕܡ ܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܚܫܝܚܬܐ
ܘܡܥܕܪܢܘܬܐ ܠܦܓܪܢܝܬܐ ܢܣܒܝܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܒܩܛܪܝܗܘܢ ܢܛܠܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܝܬ ܠܒܣܐ ܐܘ
ܒܝܬ ܟܪܡܐ ܘܦܪܕܝܣܐ ܘܡܥܪܬܐ: ܐܘ ܒܓܘܪܬܐ ܐܘ ܒܐܣܬܐ ܕܒܬܝܗܘܢ ܢܩܒܥܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܠܢܛܘܪܬܐ: ܐܘ
ܒܐܪܥܐ ܕܚܩܠܐ ܐܘ ܒܦܘܪܣܢܐ: ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܠܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܒܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܦܓܪܝܗܘܢ: ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܕܕܐܪܐ ܡܠܝܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ
ܬܘܪܣܝܐ [ܬܘܪܣܝܐ] ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܡܠܝܢ ܕܫܡܝܢ ܕܢܡܘܣܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܢ: ܘܡܫܝܚܐ [ܡܫܝܚܐ]
ܘܪܗܒܢܐ ܕܡܫܚܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ. ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܠܡܩܪܒܘ ܐܢܘܢ: ܡܬܬܪܫܝܢ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܙܕܩ
ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܬܠܒܪܘܢ. ܘܟܡܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܐܦ ܕܢܬܟܠܘܢ ܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܬܠܬ ܫܢܝܢ. ܘܟܕ ܕܗܘܝܢ
ܒܬܝܘܒܘܬܐ. ܐܢܫܝ ܥܠܡܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ: ܢܬܟܠܘܢ ܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܪܒܥ ܫܢܝܢ. ܘܕܢܗܘܘܢ
ܒܬܝܒܘܬܐ. 'Addai: If it is right that in the case of everyone who asks for a portion from the sacred elements to go with him to his house, that it be given to him without examination and when it is not known beforehand to whom the elements are going to be distributed? And whether it is appropriate that they be distributed through the hands of laymen or at the hands of a woman, because people have been found who have taken pieces of the elements and, sinning, have tied them into a knot, as certain charms or hung them on themselves like phylacteries, or placed them in their beds or the the walls of their houses. I want to learn if it is appropriate for these things to happen? Or if it is not appropriate, what punishment should people who do such things receive? Jacob: Because such evil has been dared, it is right that those elements be given with examination, if possible, and with foreknowledge of to whom they will be distributed. If, however, this had not been heard of, a precise examination to this extent would at all have been necessary; neither is it possible for the clergy to completely carry this out in the crowded congregations of the cities, either to completely examine and investigate or to themselves go and deliver the elements—to the sick or to others who need this. On account of this, there is no reproach and nothing which prohibits against their being distributed by God-fearing laymen or a chaste woman. If this had not been possible in accordance with an ancient custom, the clergy should deliver the elements

in gardens for the protection of these places; they were even being celebrated near herds of sheep, goats, cattle and horses for the purpose of their safety.[690] When a Eucharist was being performed, people were placing water or oil under the altar and afterwards distributing it to the sick. The dirt or dust of the altar itself might also be given to the sick, but only for them to eat or drink. Jacob would not permit this dirt to be sprinkled on the people themselves, or on their beds, or cribs or on top of their possessions. Nor was it permitted to put such things in the walls of their houses or in

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with appropriate honor. As for those, however, who dared the serious affront against the venerable elements of the body and blood of Christ who is God, such that they regard them only as certain things, other and ordinary, but honored by Christians, so that they hang them on their necks with the cross or with the bones and blessings of the saints, or they place them in their beds or the walls of their houses for protection, or in vineyards or gardens, or enclosed areas or, in short, for the protection of something physical, and they do not understand that these holy mysteries are only the nourishment of souls which have taken the seal of Christ and the pledge and earnest of the resurrection from the dead and the life everlasting. Now if they are clergy [who do this], their deposition should by all means take place and along with this, let them be held back from participating in the Mysteries for three years, until they are contrite. If, however, they are laymen, they should be held back from participating in the mysteries for four years and they should be in repentance.'

[690] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 110, 112; LT pp. 111-113: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܦܐܐ ܕܬܬܩܪܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܒܛܘܪܐ ܐܘ ܒܟܪܡܐ ܐܘ ܒܓܢ̈ܐ ܐܘ ܒܚܛܝܪܐ ܕܥܢܐ ܘܕܥܙ̈ܐ. ܡܛܠ ܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܒܛܘܪܐ ܡܢ ܐܢܗܘ ܕܐܠܝܨ ܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܐ ܟܠܝܐ ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܒܡܕܡ ܒܥܠܬܐ ܕܬܬܩܪܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܡܛܠ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܒܥܠ ܗܕܐ ܣܢܝܩܝܢ. ܒܟܪܡܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܘ ܒܚܩܠܬܐ ܐܘ ܒܡܫܟܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܠܬܐ ܕܥܙ̈ܐ ܐܘ ܕܥܢܐ ܐܘ ܕܬܘܪ̈ܐ ܘܪ̈ܟܫܐ: ܐܢ ܡܢ ܡܛܠ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܐܫܬܟܚܘ ܬܡܢ ܡܬܩܪܒ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܟܠܐ ܕܗܕܐ ܬܗܘܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܒܡܫܟ̈ܢܐ ܡܬܩ̈ܕܫܐ ܕܠܗܐ ܦܪܝܫܝܢ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܥܠܬ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܠܗܘܢ ܕܡܣܬܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܠܬܐ ܕܩܪ̈ܝܒܝܢ. ܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܗܕܐ ܒܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܐܢܐ ܠܐ ܕܐܢ ܐܢܐ ܕܦܐܝܐ ܐܬܝܗ: [ܐܬܝܗܝ] ܐܦܠܐ ܡܦܣ ܐܢܐ ܕܬܗܘܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܫܘܡܠܝܐ ܕܐ̈ܪܙܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ. ܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܩܢܐ ܕܢܦ̈ܫܬܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܚܝܝܢ ܘܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܥܢܕܘ ܡܢ ܗܪܟܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܒܥܝܪܐ ܐܘ ܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܕܚܝ̈ܘܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܠܠܬܐ. ܐܦ ܟܕ ܡܫܡܠܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐܪ̈ܙܐ. ܡܬܟܫܦܝܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܚܝ ܘܦܩܐ ܕܚܝܝ̈ܢ. ܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܩܢܝܢܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܥܘܡܠܝܐ ܕܥܠ̈ܠܬܐ 'Addai: Whether it is appropriate for a Eucharist to be offered up on a mountain or in vineyards or in gardens or in sheep and goat folds, for the protection of these things? Jacob: On a mountain—if it this is necessary, it is not forbidden and moreover, there is nothing blameworthy in a Eucharist being celebrated on behalf of believers who are in need of it. But as for in vineyards and fields or in [enclosures] for beasts that do not speak—goats or sheep or cattle or horses—if it is for the sake of a gathering of believers who are found there that the Eucharist is celebrated, nothing prohibits that this take place, just as in chapels, the holy ones of God are separated off. But if [the Eucharists are celebrated] for the protection of speechless things which are nearby, although those who are doing this are doing it in faith, I do not judge that it is appropriate, nor do I permit that it take place because, as I have stated, the celebration of these holy mysteries is for the sake of the salvation of souls—of those who are alive and of those who have passed away—and it is not for the protection of cattle or the healing of speechless animals, even if when celebrating the mysteries, we supplicate God, who cares for the living, even for the protection of livestock and for the fruitfulness of the harvest.'

their beds.[691] Requests were being made to allow people to take portions of the Eucharist back to their houses; Jacob, however, would only allow this if the elements were being taken to a sick person there. If there was a sick person in need of the Eucharist, cabbage leaves, grape leaves or pieces of bread might be used to carry it; afterwards, these things could be eaten as one way of disposal. Eating the Eucharist itself, Jacob noted, was helpful for healing both soul and body.[692] Another strategy for

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[691] Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 14: ܡܝܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܚܐ ܕܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܡܬܬܣܝܡܝܢ ܬܚܝܬ ܦܬܘܪ ܚܝܐ. ܟܕ ܡܬܬܓܡܪܝܢ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ. ܠܐ ܟܠܝܐ ܕܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܠܟܪ̈ܝܗܐ ܟܕ ܫܐܠܝܢ. ܗܟܘܬ ܡܢ ܥܦܪܐ ܕܡܕܒܚܐ. ܒܪܡ ܠܡܫܬܝܐ ܐܘ ܠܡܐܟܠܘܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܠܘܢܝܗܝ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܕܢܙܪܩܘܢܝܗܝ ܥܠ ܥܪ̈ܣܬܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܥܪ̈ܣܬܐ. ܐܘ ܒܪܝܫ ܩܢܝܢܝܗܘܢ. 'Water or oil which is placed under the Table of Salvation in faith while the Mysteries are being celebrated is not forbidden from being given for the healing of the sick when they request it. The same holds also for the dirt of the altar—but for drinking and eating and not so they place it upon themselves or sprinkle it on their beds or cribs or on top of their possessions.' See also, Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 112: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܟܕ ܡܬܩܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܢܬܬܣܝܡܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܝܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܚܐ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܬܚܝܬ ܦܬܘܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܒܡܛܠ ܐܣܝܘܬܐ. ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܠܟܪ̈ܝܗܐ ܘܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܗܕܐ ܫܐܠܝܢ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܟܠܗܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܗܘܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܘܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ: ܡܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܠܐ ܟܠܝܢ. ܢܗܘܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܥܕܪܢܐ ܘܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܝܢ ܘܫܐܠܝܢ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܦܩܝܕܢ ܘܠܐ ܡܦܣܢ ܠܐ ܢܗܘܝܢ. ܡ̈ܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܘ ܡܫܚܐ ܕܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܡܬܬܣܝܡܝܢ ܬܚܝܬ ܦܬܘܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܟܕ ܡܬܬܓܡܪܝܢ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ. ܠܐ ܟܠܝܐ ܕܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܠܟܪ̈ܝܗܐ ܘܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܫܐܠܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܣܝܘܬܐ. ܐܦ ܡܢܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܕܢܣܒܝܢ ܟܪ̈ܝܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܥܕܪܢܐ ܘܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܕܢܦܫܬܗܘܢ ܘܦܓܪ̈ܝܗܘܢ: ܐܦ ܐܢ ܬܗܘܐ ܕܢܬܐܟܠ ܠܗܘܢ. ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܟܠܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܠܢܛܘܪܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܝܢ: ܐܘ ܕܢܬܬܣܝܡ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܨܝܕ ܟܪ̈ܝܗܐ ܒܥܪ̈ܣܬܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܒܟܐܦ̈ܐ ܕܒܬ̈ܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܩܕܡܝܬ ܐܡܝܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ ܙܕܩ. 'Addai: Whether it is right that when the Eucharist is being offered up water or oil be put under the holy table in faith for the sake of healing, and afterwards they be given to the sick and those who ask for this. Jacob: Everything which takes place from believers and in faith is not forbidden by the canons. [Such things] happen to the aid and healing of those who believe and ask. But those things which are not commanded and not permitted should not take place. As for water then or oil which are placed in faith under the holy table as the mysteries are being celebrated, it is not forbidden that they be given to the sick and to those who ask, for the purpose of healing. So, too, in the case of a portion of the Mysteries which the sick take for the aid and healing of their souls and bodies: if it happens that it is eaten by them, nothing is forbidden. But [that they should be placed under the altar] for the protection of something else or so that something like these might be placed near the sick, in their beds or in the walls of their houses—as has already been said, this is not right at all.'

[692] See Mardin 310, fols. 196a-197b: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܒܛܪܦܐ ܕܟܪܘܒܐ ܢܫܕܪ ܐܢܫ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܒܝܕ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܠܟܪܝܗܐ: ܐܘ ܒܟܪܛܝܣܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܒܟܪܛܝܣܐ ܘܒܦܪܣܐ ܢܩܕܐ ܕܟܬܢܐ. ܗܐ ܡܢ ܟܕܘ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܗܘ ܠܢ. ܕܣܓܝܐܐ ܐܬܬܟܠܘ ܠܡܫܕܪܘ ܡܢܬܐ ܡܢ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܠܟܪ̈ܝܗܐ. ܒܕ ܠܟܪܛܝܣܐ ܐܘ ܠܦܪܣܐ. ܘܡܘܩܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܒܢܘܪܐ. ܡܕܝܢ ܘܐܦܠܐ ܛܪܦܐ ܕܟܪܘܒܐ ܡܗܪܗ ܡܕܡ ܒܪ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܡܢ ܒܬܪܟܢ. ܐܘ ܡܬܐܟܠ ܐܘ ܡܬܪܡܐ ܒܢܘܪܐ 'Addai: Whether it is right for a person to send the Eucharist by means of a woman in a leaf of cabbage to a sick person, or in a piece of paper (χάρτης)? Jacob: Look now, we are already aware that many people have relied upon sending a piece of the holy elements in a piece of paper or a clean piece of cloth, then burning the piece of paper or the cloth. And neither does the leaf of cabbage harm anything, afterwards it is either eaten or thrown into the fire.' Also see Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 110. Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 13, has a slightly different version: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܫܕܪ ܡܢܬܐ ܡܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܠܟܠ ܕܬܬܒܥ ܕܬܐܙܠ ܥܡܗ ܠܒܝܬܗ. ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܢܗܘܐ ܟܪܝܗܐ. ܘܠܡܐܟܠܘ ܢܟܠܘܢ ܠܗ. ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܢܬܡܨܘܢ ܠܡܟܠ ܒܪ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܒܝܕ ܟܠܬܒܐ ܟܐܢܐ.

dealing with illness was to uproot a certain thorny plant called the *geneshyā* in the name of a sick person and offer him the Eucharist while reciting Psalms. This was apparently being done by priests and monks, in addition to laypeople.[693] People sought to get hold of pieces of the Eucharistic bread before it had been consecrated and offered up in a church service; there seems to have been a belief that even bread with a consecration in its future had power.[694]

The power of the Eucharist extended beyond the earthly sphere of behavior: it was believed to be able to affect the saints and people who were now departed. The

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ܐܘ ܒܝܕ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܬܐ ܢܫܬܕܪܘܢ ܠܗ ܐܪܙܐ. ܒܒܪܛܝܣܐ ܐܘ ܒܦܣܩܬܐ ܢܩܕܬܐ ܕܟܬܢܐ. ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܢܬܝܩܕܘܢ. ܐܘ ܒܛܪܦܐ ܕܓܦܬܐ. ܐܘ ܒܦܣܝܬܐ ܢܩܕܬܐ ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܢܬܐܟܠܘܢ 'It is not right that a portion of the element be given to everyone who requests that it go with him to his house, except if he is sick—then let the clergy accept [his petition.]. If they are unable to enter [the house] where they are, let the elements be distributed [to the sick one] by means of righteous laymen or a believing woman in a piece of paper or a clean strip of linen and afterwards, let them be burned. Or, [let them be distributed] in a grape leaf or a pure piece of bread and afterwards, let them be eaten.' For Eucharist as healing both body and soul, see Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 112.

693 Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 136, 138: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܩܪܝܢ ܥܩܪܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܓܢܫܝܐ ܒܫܡܗ ܕܟܪܝܗܐ. ܟܕ ܐܦ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܗ ܡܩܪܒܝܢ ܘܐܟܠܝܢ ܘܫܬܝܢ ܥܡܗ ܟܕ ܡܙܡܪܝܢ [ܡܙܡܪܝܢ] ܠܗ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܩܪܘ ܥܩܪܐ ܗܢܐ: ܘܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܡܛܠܬܗ ܐܬܥܩܪ. ܐܢ ܡܢ ܩܠܝܪܘܣ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܚܡ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܢܦܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܕܪܓܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܙܢܐ ܕܢܬܟܠܘܢ ܚ̈ܡܫܐ ܝܪ̈ܚܝܢ. ܐܝܟ ܗ̇ ܕܠܦܬܟܪ̈ܐ ܕܒܚ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܥܠܡܝܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܫܒܥ ܫܢܝܢ ܙܢܐ ܕܢܬܦܪܫܘܢ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܢܫܬܟܚܘܢ ܐܪܒܥܣܪܐ ܫܢܝܢ ܙܢܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܒܬܝܒܘܬܐ. ܘܗܝܕܝܢ ܢܫܬܘܬܦܘܢ ❖ 'Addai: Concerning those who uproot the thorny plant which is called '*geneshyā*' (leucacanthus) in the name of a sick person while they also offer him the Eucharist and eat and drink with him while reciting Psalms for him. Jacob: With respect to those who uprooted this plant, as well as the one for whose sake it was uprooted: if they are clergy, they should be held back from communion for five months, in addition to falling from their rank, like a person who has sacrificed to idols. If they are lay people, they should be excommunicate for seven years. If they are found to be monks, they should be penitent for fourteen years and then let them communicate.' NB, Lamy prints ܡܙܡܝܢ in his Syriac text, which makes little good sense in this context, but translates the passage (p. 137) with 'et psalmos recitantes,' which suggests a misprint. Hence I have emended the Syriac to read ܡܙܡܪܝܢ

694 Mardin 310, fols. 199a-199b: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܠ ܡܢ ܡܢܬܐ ܕܠܚܡܐ ܕܥܠܠܐ ܠܡܕܒܚܐ ܩܘܠܘܪܐ ܠܐܢܫ. ܩܕܡ ܕܢܬܩܪܒ ܡܢܗ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܝܩܪ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܩܕܡ ܐܠܗܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܠܐ ܦܐܐ ܕܢܬܠ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܩܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܩܪܒ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܩܕܡ ܕܬܬܪܝܡ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܒܚܬܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ 'Addai: Should a person be given a portion (κολλύρα) of the bread which has been brought into the sanctuary before a Eucharist has been offered up from it? Jacob: It is not right that a human being be honored before God. It is therefore not appropriate that one give a person from the Eucharistic elements which have been offered up to God before a sacrifice to God is lifted up from them.'

Quinisext Council forbade giving the sacraments to dead bodies.[695] Addai speaks of the case of a priest who makes the prophylactic effort of taking the host and placing it next to the bones of saints inside their urn (γοῦρνα) so that when he was brought before the relics and made to take an oath by them, the saints not work a miracle or make a demonstration of power at a sin he had committed.[696] Moreover, some people also apparently believed that the bones of saints which healed the sick would stop their curative work if a Eucharist were celebrated in the same sanctuary where they were stored; this was a view which Jacob rejected.[697] The Eucharist also had the power of warding off demons. Anastasios of the Sinai wrote of a woman who, attacked by an unclean spirit while passing through a filthy location reacted with equanimity: in her hand, she was carrying a piece of the Eucharist. She stretched forth her palm and opened it up and the demon quickly sped away as soon as he saw what she was holding.[698]

By their association and contact with the Eucharist, other elements in the church had power as well. Priests were taking the empty chalice to homes and pressing them against aching body parts; they took altar coverings into homes and bound up women giving birth with them. The book of the Gospel was also being taken into

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[695] See the Eighty-Third Canon in H.R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees*, vol. 14 of P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series* (New York, 1900), p. 401.

[696] See Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 122, LT, p. 123 and Mardin 310, fol. 199a: ܐܕܝ: ܒܥܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܡܐܠܦ ܡܛܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܕܣܐܡ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܠܘܬ ܓܪܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܣܗܕܐ ܓܘ ܓܘܪܢܗܘܢ. ܕܠܐ ܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܢܚܘܘܢ ܚܝܠܐ ܒܗܘ ܕܐܣܟܠ. ܟܕ ܡܬܬܝܬܐ ܩܕܡܝܗܘܢ ܘܡܘܡܐ ܒܗܘܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܟܗܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܥܒܕ ܗܕܐ. ܡܟܣܢܘܬܐ ܒܥܕܬܢܝܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܩܒܠ 'Addai: I want to find out about a priest who places the Eucharist next to the holy bones of martyrs, inside their urn, so that they do not work or show a miracle at his error when he is brought before them and takes an oath on them. Jacob: The priest who does this should receive an ecclesiastical punishment.'

[697] See Mardin 310, fol. 199a and Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 122, 124.

[698] See S. Heid, 'Die C-Reihe erbaulicher Erzählungen des Anastasios vom Sinai im *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 2592,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 74 (2008), p. 80.

homes for its power to combat physical pain.[699] Clergy took sweepings and dirt from church sanctuaries and placed them in cisterns from which animals were drinking and washing themselves.[700] Water poured into the chalice after communion to clean it out was seen as possessing the Blood of God, as was anything else which might fall into the cup before it had been cleaned with a sponge.[701]

The view that the Eucharist and other Christian sacred objects had special power was of course not unique to Jacob. Athanasaios of the Sinai, Jacob's exact contemporary, recounts a story told him by a man who had been put in charge of the prison in Babylon in Egypt by the authorities; among his prisoners were sorcerers. He would visit them in private and interview them, writing down and passing information from them to his superiors. At one point, the oldest of the sorcerers pulled him aside in

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[699] Mardin 310, fol. 198a. ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܣܒܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܠܘܬ ܟܪܝܗܐ ܠܒܝܬܗ ܟܣܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܣܦܝܩܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܢܠܚܘܨ ܠܗ ܒܗ ܒܓܒܗ ܡܛܠ ܕܟܐܒ ܠܗ: ܐܘ ܙܘܢܪܐ ܕܦܬܘܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ: ܕܬܐܣܘܪ ܗܝ ܕܐܠܝܨܐ ܒܚܒܠܐ ܕܡܘܠܕܐ: ܐܘ ܟܬܒܐ ܝܩܝܪܐ ܕܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܥܠ ܡܐܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܐܙܠܘܢ ܠܘܬ ܟܪܝܗܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܟܕ ܗܘ ܐܬܐ ܠܥܕܬܐ ܫܠܝܛܐ ܕܢܬܩܪܒ ܒܗܘܢ. ܠܐ ܟܣܐ ܘܠܐ ܙܘܢܪܐ. ܐܦܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܐܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܗܠܝܢ ܝܠܦܢ ܡܢ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܦܩܕܘ ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܕܟܪܝܗ. ܐܠܐ ܢܡܫܚܘܢܝܗܝ ܟܗܢܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܒܫܡܗ ܕܡܪܢ. ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܢ ܡܬܒܥܝܢ ܕܢܫܩܠܘܢ. ܠܐ ܟܠܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܚܘܒܠܐ ܐܢ ܡܩܒܠܝܢ 'Addai: Whether it is appropriate for a priest to carry to a sick person, to his house, an empty holy chalice so that he can press it into his side for him because it is hurting him? Or [can he bring] the girdle [ζωνάριον] of the Holy Table so that it can bind up [a woman] who is in distress with the pains of birth. Or [can he bring] the precious book of the holy Gospel? Jacob: With respect to the holy vessels, it is entirely not right that they travel to a sick person. Even when he comes to the church, it is not permitted that he touch them—not the chalice and not the girdle [ζωνάριον], and nothing else from the holy vessels. For we have not learned these things from the holy Apostles who gave commandments concerning one who is sick. Let the priests rather anoint him with oil in the name of Our Lord. If, however, they are asked to bring the Gospel, it is not forbidden and not reproachable if they take [it].'

[700] Mardin 310, fols. 198a-198b: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܪܡܘܢ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܘ ܢܣܘܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܘܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܓܘܒܐ: ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܗܘ ܕܫܬܝܢ ܡܢܗ ܐܦ ܚܝܘܬܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܒܓܘܒܐ ܕܡܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܝܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ. ܒܚܩܠܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܢܬܛܡܪܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܢܬܪܡܘܢ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܕܒܝܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܥܡܡܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܡܫܬܝܢܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܓܘܒܐ: ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܦ ܥܣܚܬܐ ܘܐܦ ܫܬܝܐ ܕܒܥܝܪܐ. ܒܪܡ ܐܦ ܕܠܐ ܓܘܕܦܐ ܗܘܬ ܟܒܪ ܨܒܘܬܐ. ܘܐܦ ܟܕ ܟܢܘܫܝܐ ܡܫܬܕܝܢܐ ܗܘܬ ܗܝ ܒܓܘܒܐ. 'Addai: Whether it is right for the clergy to place the refuse of the sanctuary and the sweepings in a cistern of water from which animals drink? Jacob: The sweepings of the sanctuary should all the more be buried in a field and not thrown into a cistern of water. If the drinking from the cistern were only for human beings who were believers and it were not for the washing and drinking of beasts, the matter perhaps would have been without reproach and the sweepings could be cast into the cistern.'

[701] See Mardin 310, fols. 210a-210b (For Syriac text and translation see n. 562, above).

private and advised him to take precautionary measures: ‘Never sit down,’ he warned him, ‘to examine us four sorcerers unless you have first taken communion and are wearing a cross around your neck. For the others are evil people and want to hurt you, but if you do as I have told you, neither they nor anybody else can injure you.’[702] Athanasios himself and some associates healed an Armenian afflicted with an evil spirit by forcibly hanging a silver cross with a piece of the True Cross in it around the tormented man’s neck.[703] Before he was burned, a Jewish sorcerer named Daniel on Cyprus in perhaps the late 630s or early 640s admitted that his spells never had any power over Christians who took communion every day.[704] When the devil seeks to do harm to another monk, his point of attack is the Eucharist: he plants doubt in the monk’s mind as to whether the bread and wine of the Eucharist is the actual Body and Blood of Christ. Persuaded, the monk stays in his cell and does not attend the liturgy to communicate.[705] John of Bostra, a chartularios from Damascus interviewed four demon-possessed young women (speaking in Syriac) in the region of Antioch. ‘What things do you fear from Christians?’, John asked them.

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[702] For the Greek text of the story, see F. Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ *Oriens Christianus 3* (1903), p. 68: μηδέποτε καθήσῃς εἴς ἐ̓ξέτασιν ἥμῶν τῶν τεσσάρων φαρμακῶν, ἒὰν μὴ πρότερον κοινωνήσῃς καὶ φορέσῃς σταυρὸν ἐ̓πὶ τοῦ τραχήλου σου, κακοὶ γὰρ ἄνθρωποί εἴσιν οἵ ἑ̒ταῖροί μου καὶ θέλουσιν βλάψαι σε, ἀ̓λλ’ ἒὰν ποιήσῃς ὡ̒ς εἶπόν σοι, οὐ̓δὲ αὐ̓τοὶ οὐ̓δὲ ἄνθρωπος ἄ̒λλος δύναται ἀ̓δικῆσαί σε. French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase. Contribution à l’histoire du Sinai au commencement du VIIe siècle (traduction française),’ *Revue de l’institut catholique de Paris* 1 (1902), p. 140.

[703] For the Greek text of the story, see Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ pp. 65-66. French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,’ *Revue de l’institut catholique de Paris* 1 (1902), pp. 138-139.

[704] For the Greek text of the story, see Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ p. 70. French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,’ pp. 141-142. According to Anastasios, p. 70, this story took place place about the same time as the one before it, which happened 10 years before the Arab conquest of Cyprus. See *ibid*., p. 141, n.1 for more on the date.

[705] For the Greek text of the story, see Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ pp. 75-77. A subsequent vision from God during a church service convinces the monk that the bread and wine actually are the Body and Blood of Christ and the doubt is banished. French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,’ pp. 144-145.

> They said to him, ‘In truth, you have three great things: One, which you wear around your necks; one, where you are washed in the church; one, which you eat in the church service.’ John the servant of Christ then perceived that they had spoken about the precious Cross, and concerning Holy Baptism and about Holy Communion. He asked them again, saying, ‘Then which of these three things do you fear most?’ Then they answered him and said: ‘In truth, if you observe properly when you communicate, none of us has power to injure a Christian.’[706]

In Anastasios’ world, a church building itself might even have power, as we can see from a story he heard from an elderly monk in Jerusalem. There was a layman who was constantly sitting in the portico of the Church of the Resurrection there, though he spent his time neither begging nor praying. At a certain point, the monk came and sat by the man and asked him why he was there. ‘In truth, my Lord and Father,’ the man told the monk, ‘on account of my sins. I am a sorcerer, and lest I suffer disturbance from the demons, I always flee for refuge to the Holy Anastasis. A demon would not dare to enter the gate of the portico and trouble me, but I always see them standing outside, waiting for me.’[707]

The Eucharist was of course the most important ritual and mystery in the church—it was this rite which some people were apparently taking as paradigmatic and

[706] Greek text in Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ pp. 78-79: Ποῖα πράγματα φοβεῖσθε ἐκ τῶν χριστιανῶν; Λέγουσιν ἐκεῖνοι πρὸς αὐτόν: Ἔχετε ὄντως τρία πράγματα μεγάλα. Ἕν ὅ φορεῖτε εἰς τούς τραχήλους ὑμῶν, καὶ ἕν ὅπου λούεσθε εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ ἕν ὅπερ τρώγετε εἰς τὴν σύναξιν. Νοήσας οὖν ὁ τοῦ Χριστοῦ δοῦλος Ἰωάννης ὅτι περὶ τοῦ τιμίου σταυροῦ εἰρήκασι, καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος, καὶ περὶ τῆς ἁγίας κοινωνίας. Πάλιν ἠρώτησεν αὐτοὺς λέγων: Εἶτα ἐκ τῶν τριῶν πραγμάτων, ποῖον φοβεῖστε πλέον; Τότε κακεῖνοι ἀπεκρίθησαν αὐτῷ καὶ εἶπον: Ὄντως εἰ ἐφθλάττετε καλῶς ὅπερ μεταλαμβάνατε, οὐκ ἴσχυεν εἷς ἐξ ἡμῶν ἀδικῆσαι χριστιανόν. Very brief French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,’ p. 144.

[707] For the Greek text of the story, see F. Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ p. 66: ὄντως κῦρι ἀββᾶ, ἐξ ἁμαρτιῶν μοῦ φαρμακός εἰμι, καὶ μὴ φέρων τὴν ὄχλησιν τῶν δαιμόνων, ἀεὶ προσφεύγω είς τὴν ἁγίαν Ἀνάστασιν, καὶ οὐ τολμᾷ δαίμων εἰσελθεῖν τὴν θύραν τοῦ περιπάτου καὶ σιάναι με, ἀλλ’ ἀεὶ θεωρῶ αὐτοὺς ἔξωθεν ἱσταμένους καὶ περιμένοντάς με… French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,’ p. 139. For the date of this text see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 99.

trying to conform all other church rituals to, to Jacob's chagrin[708]—but it was not just the Eucharist that might be used for health or to ward off unwanted evils. Priests gave used baptismal water to women who would sprinkle it on their houses for a blessing or place it inside for healing; Jacob counseled that only the baptismal waters blessed on the night of Epiphany would be efficacious for such purposes.[709] People were taking the wooden *nāqūshā*—or semantron—and were baptizing it in baptismal waters, a practice Jacob decried as not even being Christian.[710] The *nāqūshā* was being baptized to make it more effective against hail-bearing clouds: people would take it outside and bang on it

[708] See Mardin 310, fols. 211a-211b: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܘܒܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ: ܘܒܕܘܡܝܐ ܕܠܗܠܝܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܩܢܢ ܒܗ: ܢܒܥܘܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܠܐ ܪܕܝܐ ܘܪܚܡܝ ܚܪܝܢܐ: ܕܢܬܬܩܢܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܗܢܝܢ ܐܚܪܢܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܘܐܪܙܢܝܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܕܥܘܢ. ܕܐܝܬ ܛܟܣܐ ܥܕܬܢܝܐ ܘܡܫܠܡܢܘܬܐ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܠܟܠܚܕܐ ܡܢܗܝܢ. ܒܙܢܐ ܣܝܡ ܕܝܠܝܐ ܘܦܪܝܫܐ ܘܡܫܚܠܦܐ ܛܟܣܐ ܘܣܝܡ ܐܬܩܢ. ܘܠܐ ܠܟܠܗܝܢ ܒܗܝܢ ܚܕ ܒܗܝܢ. ܒܙܢܐ ܚܕ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܘܒܙܢܐ ܦܪܝܫܐ ܘܕܝܠܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ. ܗܘ. ܗܟܘܬ ܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܘܪܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܒܙܢܐ ܡܕ[ܝܢ] ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܝܠܝܐ ܘܡܫܚܠܦܐ ❖ 'It is not right for uneducated people who love conflict to seek that the other, holy and sacramental parts of the of the services be organized in the figure and according to the canons of the consecration of the holy Eucharist and in the likeness of what is arranged in it. They should rather know that each part has an ecclesiastical ordering and an ancient tradition of the church. Each has been set down and arranged in a particular and separate and distinct way and not all of them have the same content. The things of the Eucharist are in a certain manner, and the things of baptism are in a separate and particular manner. It is the same way for the things of the holy myron, there are [therefore?] in a particular and different manner.'

[709] Mardin 310, fol. 198b: ܐܕܝ. ܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܡܢ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܕܥܡܕܘ ܡܬܥܡܕܢܐ: ܠܢ̈ܫܐ ܕܢܣܝܡܢ ܒܒ̈ܬܝܗܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܘܣܝܐ: ܐܘ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܙܠܚܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܒܟܠ ܟܠܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܘ ܚ̈ܠܝܢܐ ܘܦܫ̈ܝܛܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܕܐܬܥܡܕܘ ܡ̈ܥܡܕܐ ܐܠܐ ܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܘܣܝܐ ܘܠܒܘܪܟܬܐ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܒܪܟܝܢ ܒܠܠܝܐ ܗܘ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܕܢܚܗ ܕܡܪܢ 'Addai: Whether it is appropriate for a priest to give some of the waters of baptism after the candidates are baptized to women for them to put in their houses for healing or for the purposes of sprinkling. Jacob: It is not right at all that the waters of baptism be given for anything like this because they are not common and unconsecrated, not even after the candidates have been baptized. Let rather only the waters which are blessed on the night of Epiphany be given for healing and blessing.'

[710] Mardin 310, fol. 203a: ܐܕܝ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܥܡܕܝܢ ܠܩܝܣܐ ܕܢܩܘܫܐ ܒܡ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܠܘ ܡܢ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܒܝܬܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܪܚܘ ܗܕܐ ܥܒܕܐ ܐܟܪܝܘܬܐ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܩܝܣܐ ܠܐ ܪܓܫܢܐ ܢܨܒܥܘܢ ܒܡ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ: ܘܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܠܗ ܓܘܚܟܐ ܠܐܪܙܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ. ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܡܕܡ ܠܡܐܡܪ: ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܢܘܟܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ. ܡܢܐ ܠܝ ܠܡܕܢ ܠܒ̈ܪܝܐ 'Addai: Concerning those who baptize the wood of the *nāqūshā* in the waters of baptism. Jacob: If those who had the audacity to do this foul thing—to dip insentient wood in the water of baptism and make the Christian mystery a laughingstock—belonged to our household, there would have been something to say. But since they are heretics and strangers to the church, "what do I have to do with judging outsiders?" (1 Cor. 5:12)' See also Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 150.

to prevent hail from falling.[711] They would do the same thing with the cross from churches and the Eucharistic elements. Jacob did permit the use of the *nāqūshā*, cross and elements for these purposes, so long as it was done in faith and so long as the *nāqūshā* had not been baptized.[712] Priests would also read out from the Psalter in order to keep hail from falling on the fields of their villages.[713] Priests would pour the oil of

[711] I am grateful to Peter Brown for pointing out to me the similarity between this practice and the practice in the West of baptizing and/or naming bells, one of the purposes of which was to make their noise more effective against hail.

[712] Mardin 310, fol. 203a: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܦܐܐ ܕܢܩܘܫ ܢܩܘܫܐ: ܘܢܦܩ ܨܠܝܒܐ ܘܩܘܕ̈ܫܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܥܢܢܐ ܕܒܪܕܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܥܡܕܘ ܢܩܘܫܐ: ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܥܡܕܘܗܝ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܥܪܩܘܢ ܠܥܢ̈ܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܢܩܫܝܢ ܒܗ. ܡܗܝ̈ܡܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܢܩܫܝܢ ܢܩܘܫܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܥܢܢܐ ܕܒܪܕܐ. ܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܕܐܥܡܝܕ ܡܦܩܝܢ ܠܗ ܘܢܩܫܝܢ. ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܕܡܨܐ ܠ ܫܠܐ ܕܢܥܪܩܝܘܗ̇. ܐܠܐ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܢܦܩܝܢ ܕܢܒܥܘܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܕܢܚܘܣ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ. ܘܡܐ ܕܡܦܩܝܢ ܨܠܝܒܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܩܘܕ̈ܫܐ ܕܢܬܟܫܦܘܢ ܒܗܘܢ. ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܘܐܦ ܢܩܘܫܐ ܢܩܫܝܢ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܥܡܐ ܢܩܪܘܢ ܠܥܡܐ. ܘܢܬܬ ܬܝܘܬܐ ܢܩܒܠܘܢ ܒܩܠܗ. ܡܟܝܠ ܠܐ ܚܝܒܝܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܒܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ‘Addai: Whether it is appropriate for us to strike the *nāqūshā* and to bring out the cross and the consecrated elements against a hail cloud. Jacob: Those who baptised the *nāqūshā* baptized it on account of this so that they can put the clouds to flight, as they say, when they strike it. Believers, however, who strike a *nāqūshā* against a hail cloud, are not to bring it forth as something that has been baptized, nor as something able to give it flight. Instead, let them bring it out in faith, in order to implore God that he have mercy upon them, and when they [also] bring out the Cross of Christ and the consecrated elements, that they may make supplication with them. Let them also beat the *nāqūshā* for this reason: in order to summon the people and for them to be moved to remorse by means of its sound. Therefore, those who do these things in faith are not worthy of reproach.’ See also Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 150, 152.

[713] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 136: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܠܡ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܕ: ܘܠܐ ܢܦܠ ܒܪܕܐ ܒܐܪ̈ܥܬܐ ܕܩܪܝܬܗ ܒܗ̇ ܫܢܬܐ. ܘܐܝܢ [ܘܐܢ] ܡܛܠܬܗ ܠܐ ܢܦܠ. ܐܢ ܓܕܫܐ ܘܠܐ ܢܦܠ ܐܝܟ ܦܣܩܗ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܘ ܦܪܝ ܘܩܫܐ ܠܐ ܩܫܝܫܐ. ܥܡ ܡܢܬܐ ܕܦܪ̈ܝܫܐ ܐܬܐܡܪܘ ܘܢܦ ܕܢܬܬܚܫܒ. ܕܢܕܥ ܕܝܢ ܗܝ ܕܝܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܘܢܦܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܟܢ ܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ. ܠܐ ܡܬܡܨܝܐ ܗܝ. ܒܪܡ ܕܝܢ. ܐܘ ܠܐ ܓܕܫܬ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܬܡܢ ܒܪܕܐ ܒܗ̇ ܫܢܬܐ: ܠܘ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܟܠܦܘܬ ܒܟܠ ܫܢܬܐ ܘܒܟܠܙܒܢ ܗܦܟܐ ܗܘܐ. ܐܘ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܬܬܕܒܪܬ ܗܕܐ. ܟܕ ܨܒܐ ܕܢܫܕܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܛܘܥܝܝܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܬܟܝܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܥܠܝܗ̇. ܘܢܫܠܡ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܗܘܢܐ ܡܣܠܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܟܬܝܒ܀ ‘Addai: Concerning a priest who speaks words from the Psalter and hail does not fall on the lands of his village that year: whether it is on his account that it does not fall, or because of chance, and it does not fall because of his decision? Jacob: He himself is not a priest; he should be classed with the group which they have just spoken about [i.e., non-Christians]. Now, so that we know the judgment of God, we will answer concerning these things with precision, in the following way: it is not possible. Now perhaps, either there did not chance to be hail there in that year—for it is by all means not the case that every year every this takes place—or this was ordained by God when He wanted to send upon them the error upon which they had relied and turn them over to a reprobate mind, as it is written.’ (cf. Romans 1: 24, 26, 28). LT, p. 137. See also, Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 21: ܘܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܡܢ ܕܘܝܕ. ܕܠܐ ܢܚܘܬ ܒܪܕܐ ܥܠ ܚܩܠܐ ܡܛܥܝܢܐ ܗܘ ‘And a priest who speaks words from David [i.e., the Psalter] so that hail not fall on a field is one who leads astray.’ Such practices seemed to have lived on well beyond Jacob's life: a manuscript of a Karshūnī Psalter preserved in Birmingham (Mingana 281) must have been used for similar purposes. ‘A characteristic feature of the MS,’ Alphonse Mingana wrote, ‘is that it indicates on the margins the occasion on which many psalms are recited for magical, medical and astrological purposes.’ See A. Mingana, *Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts Now in the Possession of the*

the myron into the ear of a person who was being afflicted with evil; they also might anoint such a person with it.[714] People were taking the blessings of saints into fields and vineyards in order to drive away locusts, worms, scorpions and weevils.[715]

It is also worth pointing out that though Jacob condemned most of the uses of the Eucharist and other sacred items in trying to cope with forces outside of human control, these were nevertheless *Christian* responses which fit on one part of a spectrum of responses available to people living in the seventh century. We get a brief sense of this in Jacob's canons where he condemns those who, he claims, rely on demons to help protect their vineyards and cattle from the attacks of wild animals. Those who were doing such things likely did not see themselves as relying on satanic power to secure

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Trustees of the Woodbrooke Settlement, Selly Oak, Birmingham, vol. 1, *Syriac and Garshūni Manuscripts* (Cambridge, 1933), col. 550.

[714] Mardin 310, fols. 198b-199a: ܐܕܝ، ܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܠܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܡܬܟܫܦܝܢ ܠܗ ܡܘܪܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܢܪܡܘܢ ܒܐܕܢܗ ܕܗܘ ܕܡܬܐܢܣ ܡܢ ܒܝܫܐ: ܐܘ ܕܢܡܫܚܘܢܝܗܝ، ܡܢܗ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܠܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܢܬܥܒܕ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܢܡܪܚ ܟܗܢܐ ܢܥܒܕ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ. ܢܩܒܠ ܡܣܘܡ ܒܢܝܫܐ ܥܕܬܢܝܐ 'Addai: Whether it is appropriate for a priest to give the holy myron to believers who ask, so they can put it in the ear of the person who is afflicted by evil, or that they might anoint him with it. Jacob: Something like this should not be done. If a priest dares to do something in this way, let him receive an ecclesiastical punishment.'

[715] Mardin 310, fol. 207b: ܐܕܝ، ܐܢ ܘܙܩ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܥܪܩܘ ܙܒܢ ܚܕܐ ܠܘܬ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܠܘܬ ܩܕܝܫܘܗܝ. ܘܐܝܬܝܘ ܒܘܪܟܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܠܚܩܠܐ ܐܘ ܠܟܪܡܐ: ܡܛܠ ܩܡܨܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܘܛܐ ܐܘ ܥܩܪܒܐ ܐܘ ܡܚܘܬܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ: ܕܢܬܟܬܫܘܢ ܥܡܗܘܢ. ܘܢܪܕܦܘܢ ܩܡܨܐ ܐܘ ܢܩܛܠܘܢ ܡܫܘܛܐ ܐܘ ܥܩܪܒܐ. ܐܢ ܗܘ ܕܟܕ ܦܠܝܓܝܢ ܥܠ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܕܠܐ ܣܦܩ ܠܡܥܕܪܘܬܗܘܢ ܗܕܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ. ܒܒܝܫܬܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ. ܘܣܪܝܩܐ ܗܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܒܝܬ ܓܘܣܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܒܥܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܠܗܘܢ: ܐܝܬܝܘ ܗܘ ܕܢܝܬܘܢ ܒܘܪܟܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬܝܘ ܐܝܟ ܐܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܘ ܒܘܪܟܬܐ: ܐܝܟ ܐܢܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܦܝܛܐ ܘܛܢܢܐ: ܘܠܐ ܟܕ ܦܠܝܓܝܢ ܥܠ ܚܝܠܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܩܝܡܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܐܝܟ ܡܐ ܕܡܨܝܢ ܘܛܪܕܝܢ ܠܒܥܠܕܒܒܐ. ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܚܣܪܐ ܠܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܠܗܘܢ: ܗܝ ܕܢܦܩܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܚܝܠܗܘܢ ܘܢܛܪܕܘܢ ܩܡܨܐ: ܐܘ ܢܩܛܠܘܢ ܡܫܘܛܐ ܒܟܪܡܐ ܐܘ ܩܠܡܐ ܐܘ ܥܩܪܒܐ ܒܚܩܠܐ ܕܚܛܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܝܬܝܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܕܐ ܚܣܕܐ. ܘܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܐܡܪ ܗܕܐ. ܡܢ ܚܒܢܢܐ ܣܒܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܢܬܡܢܐ ܕܡܬܚܫܒܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܝܕܘܥܐ ܘܡܗܝܡܢܐ܀ 'Addai: Whether it is right for those who at one point took refuge in God and in His saints and brought the blessings of the saints to a field or to a vineyard on account of locusts or worms or scorpions or another scourge, that they fight and drive away the locust or kill the worm or scorpions. Jacob: If it is the case that they do this while doubting the power of God, that he is sufficient to help them, they act wickedly and the place of refuge is empty for them and it was not necessary for them to bring the blessings of the saints. If, however, they brought the blessings as people who believe, like diligent and zealous people, and not doubting the power of God, they would have stood as much as possible and driven out the enemy. The act of going out according to their ability and driving away the locust or killing the worms in a vineyard or weevils or scorpions in a field of wheat does not cause loss to their faith or to them, nor does it bring them any sort of reproach. Now if a person says this [sc. that we should bring the blessings of the saints into fields and vineyards to combat locusts, worms, scorpions, etc.], I think we should class him either with the lazy or with those who know and are believers.'

their desired ends; whatever it was they were doing, however, seems to have not made use of explicitly Christian symbolic resources to produce its desired effects.[716]

Christian sacred objects and symbols were being used—however improperly, by Jacob's lights—to try to achieve good purposes, but they might also be used to intentionally commit evil. Addai gives the example of two men, neither of whom could read or write and neither of whom knew any incantations, who had a dispute. One of them might go and draw lines on the funeral urns of the saints, the tombs of lepers and beneath church altars in the name of his adversary so that that enemy might become ill or get injured. Addai wanted to know whether this might actually cause someone to get sick or have evil befall him; and Jacob granted that it could be the case due to God's permitting demonic activity.[717] Anastasios of the Sinai reported a priest in Cyprus in

[716] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 144, 146 (LT, pp. 145,147): ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܠܚܝܘܬܐ ܕܕܒܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܐܟܠܢ ܡܢ ܟܪ̈ܡܝܗܘܢ ܘܠܚܝܘܬ ܥܒܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܣܒܢ ܡܢ ܩܢܝܢܗܘܢ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܚܝܒܐ ܘܢܘܟܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܟܕ ܐܬܬܟܠܘ ܥܠ ܫܐ̈ܕܐ ܕܢܣܟܪܘܢ ܦܘܡ̈ܐ ܕܚܝܘܬܐ ܥܒܕܘ ܗܕܐ. ܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܡܢ ܩܘܫܬ ܡܥܙܪܝܢ ܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܢܚܘܢ ܕܡܥܕܪܝܢ ܠܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܛܥܝܘ ܒܬܪܗܘܢ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܬܟܠܘ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ 'Addai: Concerning those who make wild animals not eat from their vineyards and feral beasts not take from their cattle. Jacob: Such people are condemned and strangers to the Church. They have done this having relied on demons to shut the mouths of the animals. Indeed, they [demons] also are in reality eager to show that they help those who have gone astray after them in these things which they have relied upon them for.' NB: Lamy, p. 144, n. 2, notes that the manuscript reads ܕܥܒܕܝܢ but that he has corrected it to ܡܥܒܕܝܢ at the beginning of Addai's question. I have preferred the original reading here.

[717] Mardin 310, fols. 207a-207b: ܐܕܝ. ܡܛܠ ܐܢܫܐ [ܐܢܫ̈ܐ] ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܠܚܫܐܬܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܟܬܘܒ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܩܪܐ: ܘܟܕ ܬܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܪܝܢܐ ܥܡ ܚܕ̈ܕܐ ܘܢܩܘܢ ܘܢܐܬܘܢ ܠܒܥܠܕܒܒܘܬܐ ܣܓܝܐܬܐ: ܘܐܙܠ ܚܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܘܚܝܛ ܚܘܛܐ ܥܠ ܓܠܘܣܩ̈ܡܐ ܕܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ ܘܥܠ ܩܒܪܐ ܕܓܪ̈ܒܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܒܥܠܕܒܒܗ: ܬܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܬܚܝܬ ܦܬܘܪ̈ܐ ܕܥܕ̈ܬܐ: ܘܢܚܠܫܘܢ ܬܗܘܐ ܘܢܬܟܪܗ ܐܘ ܢܬܚܒܠ. ܐܘ ܢܬܢܟܐ ܡܢ ܟܐܒܐ. ܘܐܢ ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܢܬܟܪܗ ܐܘ ܬܐ ܒܝܫ ܘܢܬܟܪܗ: ܐܘ ܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܡܕܡ ܕܒܝܫ ܡܛܠ ܚܕܐ ܐܦ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܥܒܕܘ ܢܟܝܢܘܬܗ ܠܬܠܡܝܕܘܬܐ: ܘܟܠ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܐܦܩܘܗ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܙܝܙܐ ܘܡܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܬܘܒ ܐܘ ܕܙܕܩܬܐ. ܐܬܚܙܝܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܡܢ ܕܫܠܝܛܘ. ܘܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܒܪ̈ܢܫܐ ܡܢ ܥܠܝܡܐ ܘܐܢܫܐ ܠܟܝܢ ܡܕܡ ܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܫܪܝܪ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܟܢ ܘܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܗܘܢ: ܘܠܐ ܢܬܒܪ ܐܦ ܠܐ ܠܥܒܕܝܗܘܢ ܒܟܘܦܪܬܗܘܢ. ܘܐܟܠܐ ܟܬܒܝܗܘܢ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܘܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܡܬܚܫܚܢܐ ܢܬܬܚܝܒ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܗܟܢ. ܗܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܢܣܒܐ ܢܬܒܪܝܢ. ܘܐܝܟ ܡܦܠܬܐ ܢܬܬܣܝܡ. ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܐܢ ܡܬܬܪܝܨ. ܗܕܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܫ̈ܐܕܐ ܗܝ. ܒܟܠܗܝܢ ܘܥܠ ܟܠ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܬܚܫܒܝܢ ܕܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ. ܘܐܦ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܢ. ܕܟܝܢ ܡܫܒܚܐ ܥܒܕ ܕܢܬܪ̈ܘܢ ܒܢܝܫܐ ܒܢܝ ܒܢܝܬܐ ܕܐܢܫ̈ܐ ܠܒܬ ܗܘ ܕܦܩܕܐ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܠܐܬܪܘܬܐ ܒܐܝܕܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܕܐܢܫܐ: ܐܝܟ ܕܢܒܘܗܝ ܟܐܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܪ̈ܕܝܢܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܠܝܛ. ܠܗܘܢ ܠܕܝ̈ܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܬܠܒܟ. ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܟܦܪܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܟܠ ܡܢ 'Addai: In the case of [two] people, neither one of whom knows incantations or how to write or read, when they have a dispute and make noise and come to the point of great enmity, and one of them goes and draws lines [?] on the reliquaries of the saints and the tomb of the lepers in the name of his enemy,

the late 630s who became a sorcerer and went so far in his depravity as to eat with unchaste women and other sorcerers using patens and other vessels employed in the Eucharist. Unlike Addai's case, where God permitted this abuse, in this instance, apparently limits of divine toleration were reached. Put on trial by church authorities for his gross abuses, the priest acknowledged that once he became a sorcerer (φαρμακός), an angel from God would bind him to a pillar and the angel himself would celebrate the Eucharist and administer it to the people, only letting the priest go once the service had been completed.[718]

The Eucharist and the vessels used to administer it were treated with all the care that radioactive material today receives. Theodota of Amid's *Life* records with admiration how, having caught the already-communicated Eucharistic elements after they had been vomited up—along with other food—by a sick woman, he bowed and took them again.[719] The same extreme veneration for the Eucharist and anything associated with it comes through in Jacob's canons. Cautious to make sure that it was

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and also under the table of the altars in sanctuaries and hands him over [?] there and he becomes sick and gets injured or is afflicted by evil: if this is the case, will he get sick? If it happens, will he get ill or will something evil happen to him? Jacob: At one point, people who gave themselves to error and who, having walked in all waywardness, went astray from the truth and from the path which is straight and well-trod, made themselves strangers to God and to his worship. But we have learned from the Holy Apostle that we are not to judge those who are outside (cf. 1 Cor. 5:12), therefore we shall gladly leave things such as these and the affairs of these people and we will not even mention their names on our lips, nor their deeds. Now, if someone among the believers is found to be doing these things, let him be judged like one who practices auguries, and let him be condemned like a murderer, on account of the fact that he [sc. his target] might be injured. This [is a possibility], I will say, because the demons are fighting at all times and against everything in order to carry out what they have taught and God, for His part, often lets humans, for the sake of their benefit, be chastised by means of the evil of others, and He will pronounce that which is precisely in accord with His laws—the righteous destruction of those who have done evil according to His just and incomprensible judgements—while we do not pry into things which are above us.' I am unsure about some parts of this translation. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 602, interprets *neḥrūq ḥerqē* to mean 'determines curses.'

[718] For the Greek text of the story, see F. Nau, 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte),' *Oriens Christianus* 3 (1903), pp. 69-70. French summary available in *idem*., 'Les récits inédits du moine Anastase. Contribution a l'histoire du Sinai au commencement du VIIe siècle (traduction française),' *Revue de l'institut catholique de Paris* 1 (1902), p. 141. This story is supposed to have taken place about ten years before the Arab conquest of Cyprus; for the date, see *ibid*. p. 141, n. 1.

[719] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 551a (section 70 in my edition).

being handled appropriately, Addai had many questions. Could a layman or a woman take the Eucharist out of the paten with their own hand because of the vessel's weight and depth and the priest not being close by to give the element?[720] I have already mentioned the use of cabbage leaves, grape leaves, and pieces of unblemished bread to carry the Eucharist. We know that this was done because Addai had asked Jacob whether it was acceptable to do so. According to Jacob, it was; people would also use leaves of paper or clean pieces of cloth to convey the Eucharist to the sick, who presumably could not make it to church. After their use to carry the elements, these things were burned. If the cabbage leaf was not eaten afterwards, it was to be burned as well.[721] If the Eucharistic wine were accidentally spilled, Jacob preferred that the spot where the Blood fell be scraped with a knife and the shavings be placed in fire or some other place. If that was not possible, burning coals were to be placed on the spot to dry it up, or water was to be poured there and it was to be scrubbed. The concern was with preventing the Blood of Christ from being stepped on.[722] A priest carrying the

[720] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 100.

[721] See Mardin 310, fols. 196a-196b; Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 110; Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 13 (see n. 692 above for the Syriac text and ET).

[722] Mardin 310, fols. 201b-202a: ܐܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐ ܐܫܬܕ: ܕܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܢ ܨܒܝܢܐ ܕܐܢܫ. ܡܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܠܗ ܠܕܘܟܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܐܫܕܝܢ ܒܗ. ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܝܢ. ܓܘܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܢܘܪܐ ܣܝܡܝܢ ܒܗ܀ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܗܢܘܢ ܡܢ ܕܡ̈ܝܐ ܪܡܝܢ ܒܗ ܒܕܘܟܬܐ. ܕܢܛܒܥܘܢ ܘܢܫܘܓܘܢ ܒܗ̇ ܠܛܘܦܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܕܡܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܢܦܠܬ ܒܗ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܓܘܡܪ̈ܐ ܣܝܡܝܢ. ܕܢܝܒܫܘܢ ܠܕܘܟܬܐ ܗܝ ܡܢ ܩܕܡ. ܒܪܡ ܘܠܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ. ܕܢܥܒܪܘܢ ܠܛܘܦܬܐ ܗܝ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܢܗ ܕܕܘܟܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܫܟܚܘ. ܢܝܫܐ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܬܕܝܫ. ܡܕܝܢ ܛܒ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ. ܗܝ ܕܬܬܓܪܕ ܕܘܟܬܐ ܗܝ ܒܣܟܝܢܐ ܐܢ ܡܫܟܚܐ ܦܩܝܚܐ: ܘܬܬܪܡܐ ܐܘ ܒܢܘܪܐ ܐܘ ܒܕܘܟ ܐܚܪܝܢ. ܐܢܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܡܬܥܒ̈ܕܢ ܢܗܘܝܢ. ܟܕ ܝܕܝܥܐ. ܕܚܝܠܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܛܫܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܢ ܐܬܪ. ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܐܪܥܐ ܢܦܩ. ܐܠܐ ܠܡܫܬܘܬܐ ܕܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ 'If the holy blood is poured out apart from human intention, what should we do to the spot [it is poured upon]? For some people pour water on it, but others place burning coals in it. Jacob: Now, some put water on the place, wishing to flood and clean with it a drop of the holy blood which has fallen, but others place burning coals on the spot, eager to dry it up. It is, however, neither the former nor the latter [which should be done]. They have not been able to remove the holy drop from the place. Indeed, their aim was that it not be stepped upon; therefore, better than these [options] would be for that spot to be scraped, if possible with a knife—it would be more suitable—and then let it be placed either in fire or in another location. But if it is not possible, [to do this], let these other alternatives [sc. pouring water or placing burning coals on the spot] take place, it being known that the power of the

Eucharist from one place to another was not allowed to put it in a bag on a beast of burden and then ride on top of it; he was supposed to carry it on his shoulder.[723] Dirt and sweepings from the sanctuary were to be buried in a field or perhaps put into a cistern of water from which only humans would drink; Jacob opposed the practice I have already mentioned of placing them in a cistern from which animals were drinking.[724] A priest who had the audacity to throw a consecrated host which had grown moldy into a cistern of water was to be deposed. The water of the cistern was to be kept and only used as a source of drink for believers. After the water was all gone, the mud in the cistern was to be taken out and buried in a clean spot in a field.[725] If any part of an altar which had somehow been broken remained undamaged, it, too, was to be thoroughly broken up and carefully buried deeply in a field in such a way that it would not be uncovered.[726] If a chalice made from glass were broken, the glass was not

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sacred elements is not being stepped upon and not being despised and that it does not attach to the floor, but rather to the souls of believers.'

[723] Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 13: ܠܐ ܦܐܠܐ ܠܟܘܡܪܐ ܕܢܣܝܡ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܒܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܥܠ ܒܥܝܪܐ ܘܢܪܟܒ ܥܠܘܗܝ. ܐܠܐ ܥܠ ܟܬܦܗ ܢܛܥܢܝܗܝ. ܟܕ ܠܟܪܝܗܐ ܕܪܚܝܩ ܡܘܒܠ. 'It is not appropriate for a priest to put the element in a bag on a beast and ride on top of it. Instead, let him carry it on his shoulder when he is delivering it to a distant sick person.'

[724] Mardin 310, fols. 198a-198b (see n. 700, above). Compare this practice of burying with the report that Caliph 'Uthmān buried alternate codices of the Qur'ān between the Prophet's tomb and the minbar in Medina in Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* (Cairo, 1936), p. 34.

[725] Mardin 310, fol. 198b: ܐܕܝ: ܡܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܣܒܘܢ ܟܗܢܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܕܘ ܦܓܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܐܬܩܕܫ ܘܐܬܥܦܫ ܒܓܘܒܐ ܕܡܝܐ. ܘܡܢܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܡܝܘܗܝ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܟܗܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܪܚܘ ܗܕܐ ܡܪܚܘܬܐ ܘܫܕܘ ܦܓܪܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܒܓܘܒܐ ܕܡܝܐ. ܬܗܘܐ ܡܫܬܪܝܘܬܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܗܘܢ. ܡܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܓܘܒܐ ܗܘ ܢܬܢܛܪܘܢ ܘܠܫܬܝܐ ܕܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܢܗܘܘܢ. ܚܡܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܓܘܒܐ ܗܘ ܢܣܩ ܡܢ ܒܬܪܟܢ. ܘܢܬܬܩܒܪ ܒܚܩܠܐ ܒܕܘܟܬܐ ܢܩܝܬܐ 'Addai: What should priests who have thrown a consecrated Body which has grown moldy in to a cistern of water suffer? And what should happen to the water? Jacob: In the case of priests who have undertaken this affront and thrown the Body of God into a cistern of water, their deposition should take place. As for the waters of the cistern, they should be preserved and only used for the drinking of believers. The mud of the cistern should be taken up afterwards and buried in a field in a clean place.'

[726] Mardin 310, fol. 200a: ܐܕܝ: ܡܕܒܚܐ ܕܫܝܫܐ ܐܘ ܕܩܝܣܐ ܕܐܬܬܪܥܘ ܒܙܘܥܐ ܐܘ ܬܪܥܘ ܐܢܘܢ ܒܥܠܕܒܒܐ. ܡܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܒܗܘܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܡܕܒܚܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܐܬܬܪܥܘ. ܙܕܩ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܡܢܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܘ ܕܫܠܡܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܬܬܪܥ. ܢܬܬܪܥܘܢ ܠܓܡܪ ܘܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܘܢܬܛܡܪܘܢ ܒܚܩܠܐ ܐܪܥܐ ܥܡ ܡܢ ܢܩܘܬܐ ܒܥܘܡܩܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܬܓܠܘܢ 'Addai: In the case of marble or wooden altars which have been broken up in an earthquake or which enemies have broken, what should happen to them? Jacob:

to be sold to glassmakers for reuse, but was rather to be finely pulverized and buried in the earth. The tin from a chalice that was broken was to be given to Christian craftsmen and remade into a new chalice.[727] Jacob himself reported seeing Christians using fabric which had images of pagan gods and goddesses on it to make altar coverings—they had ignored the explicit pagan imagery of the fabric and used it because of its fineness and high quality. This was a practice that Jacob unsurprisingly opposed. Nevertheless, despite the presence of idols on the fabric, its association with the Eucharistic table still gave it a special status. In the case of the pagan textile which Jacob himself had witnessed in use on an altar, he had—with difficulty—persuaded its owners to tear it up and bury it in the ground.[728] In other words, it was given the same disposal as other items which had been associated with the Eucharist.

Regarding altars which have been broken up, in whatever way, if there is a certain portion of them or a spot which has not been broken, let them be thoroughly and finely broken up and deeply buried in the earth with care so that they will not be uncovered.'

[727] Mardin 310, fols. 201a-201b: ܐܕܝ، ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܢܙܒܢܘܢ ܙܓܘܓܝܬܐ ܕܟ̈ܣܐ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ ܕܐܬܬܒܪܘ: ܐܘ ܕܡܢ ܐܒܪܐ ܕܟ̈ܣܐ ܩܘܒ̈ܥܐ: ܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܩܘܕܪ̈ܐ ܟܠܕܪܝܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܐܦܠܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܬܗܘܐ. ܐܠܐ ܙܓܘܓܝܬܐ ܕܟ̈ܣܐ ܕܐܬܬܒܪܘ: ܬܘܒ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܬܒܪ ܕܩܝܩܐܝܬ. ܘܬܬܛܡܪ ܒܥܘܡܩܐ ܕܐܪܥܐ. ܐܒܪܐ ܕܝܢ ܢܬܝܗܒ ܠܐܘܡܢ̈ܐ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ. ܘܢܬܩܢܘܢ ܢܥܒܕܘܢܝܗܝ܆ ܠܗ̇ ܒܗ̇ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܩܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ. ܘܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܬܐ ܐܢܫܝܬܐ. ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܠܐܢܫ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܡܢܗ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܡܪܚ ܘܥܒܕ ܢܩܒܠ ܡܟܣܢܘܬܐ ܥܕܬܢܝܬܐ܀ ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܢܚܫܐ ܕܦܝܪ̈ܡܝܗܘܢ ܕܕܬܢ ܘܐܒܝܪܡ. ܥܡ ܕܥܘ̈ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ ܘܩܘܡܘܠܝܐ ܕܦܘܩ̈ܕܢܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ: ܫܒܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܐܢܫܝܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܦܩܕ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܡܢܗ ܡܕܒܚܐ. ܘܢܬܬܣܝܡ ܒܒܝܬܗ ܕܡܪܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܕܟܒܪ ܐܬܩܕܫ ܠܗ ܢܚܫܐ ܗܘ. ܟܕ ܐܡܪܚܘ ܪ̈ܫܝܥܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܘܩܡܘ ܩܕܡ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܚܐܝܬ ܕܢܣܝܡܘܢ ܒܣ̈ܡܐ 'Addai: Whether priests should sell the glass of holy chalices which have broken, or whether people should form pots (καλδάρια) from the tin of the cups? Jacob: Not one of these things should take place. Instead, the glass of chalices which have been broken should be again finely broken up and buried deeply in the earth. As for tin, let it be given to Christian craftsmen and let them rework it for the same service of the sacred elements. But it is not lawful for a person to make of it [sc. the tin] for some other human use. The one who dares to do [this] will receive an ecclesiastical rebuke, for Moses did not permit for the bronze of the censers of Dathan and Abiram—though they were wicked men and enemies of the commandments of God—to be for a human use, but instead he ordered that an altar be made from it and that it be placed in the house of the Lord, inasmuch as that bronze had already been consecrated when those wicked men acted insolently and rose up audaciously before the Lord in order to burn incense.' (cf. Numbers 16:37-38)

[728] Mardin 310, fols. 208a-208b: ܕܒܥܘܒ ܠܡܕܒܚܗ، ܐܝܟ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܕܒܪ ܒܥܘܦܪܐ ܕܬܟܬܢܐ ܘܡܢ ܪܘܬܐ ܡܟܠܠܬܐ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܚܙܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܕܠܐ ܒܗܘܢܐ ܚܟܝܡ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܬܠܒܫܬܐ ܠܦܬܘܪܐ ܡܕܒܚܐ. ܒܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܨܠܡ̈ܐ ܡܨܛܒܥܝܢ ܕܕ̈ܚܠܬܐ. ܐܦ ܠܫܡܫܬܐ ܚܕܝܬܐ ܘܡܥܕܪܢܝܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܝܐ ܘܪ̈ܒܬܐ ܕܢܩܝܦ. ܘܡܢ ܪܘܬܐ ܕܫܦܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܝܢܗ ܘܡܥܕܪܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܬܠܠܠܝܢ. ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܪ ܕܢܫܘ ܐܝܟܢ ܒܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܬܬܪܝܣܘ ܗܘܬ ܕܦܠܛܬܐ. ܒܥܡܠ.

Other sacred vessels received similar careful treatment. If a glass vial used for the myron was broken, its shattered pieces were supposed to be buried underground—not, Jacob emphasized, sold to glassmakers for them to reuse. If the vial was made from silver or tin and broken, it was to be given to Christian craftsmen who would restore it and return it to use. A dirty vial was to be washed in the baptismal font and then reused.[729] If vials and other vessels used to hold blessings from the saints were broken, they were to be buried in the earth.[730]

ܕܐܦ ܕܒܚܒܝܢ ܬܠܒܫܬܐ ܠܡܕܒܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܢܬܠܒܫܘܢ ܠܗܕܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܥܡܝܪܘܬܐ. ܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܬ ܚܙܝܬ ܥܠ ܦܬܘܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܘܠܡܚܣܢ ܐܦܝܣܬ ܠܗܢܘܢ ܕܩܢܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ̇. ܕܢܨܪܘܢܗ̇ ܘܢܛܡܪܘܢܝܗ̇ ܒܐܪܥܐ. ܡܢ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܬܐܬ ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܐܪܫܡܬ ܠܟ. ܘܐܚܘܝܬ ܕܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܥܠ ܦܬܘܪܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܒ ܥܠܘܗ̇ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܘ ܡܒܛܠܢܐ ܘܡܫܝܢܐ ܕܦܬܟܪ̈ܐ ܘܕܕܒܚܝܗܘܢ. ܘܡܕܟܝܢܐ ܕܟܠܗ̇ ܛܡܐܘܬܐ: ܢܗܘܘܢ ܪܫܝܡܝܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܦܬܟܪ̈ܐ ܘܕܕܒܚܝܗܘܢ. ܘܟܠܗ̇ ܛܢܦܘܬܐ ܘܣܘܚܦܘܬܐ ܕܛܥܝܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܝܗܘܢ ܘܕܐܠܗܬܗܘܢ ܕܚܢܦܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܗܕܐ ܒܠܐ ܒܘܚܢܐ ܘܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܗܕܐ ܘܕܠܐ ܒܥܠܬܐ: ܕܡܛܠ ܫܦܝܪܘܬܐ ܕܡܐܢܐ ܘܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܕܙܩܘܪܐ ܘܕܨܘܪܬܐ ܕܒܗ. ܢܗܘܐ ܠܩܘܕ̈ܫܐ. ܦܩܚܐ ܗܘ, ܝܬܝܪ ܕܢܬܬܚܫܚ ܡܕܒܚܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܟܣܝܬܐ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ ܐܘ ܒܗܠܝܢ ❖ 'Of Jacob, by himself [i.e., unprompted by a question]: There are people who, only looking upon the beauty of the fabrics and the excellence of the image on them, make from them coverings for the Holy Table without examination. On the fabrics, however, are found inscribed pagan, repulsive stories of the gods and goddesses of the Greeks, and the image of foul and disgusting interactions which are not to be spoken of. It has happened that these things—which it is not appropriate for Christians to look upon—have been found to be made into coverings for the Holy Altar. Now I myself have seen this repugnant thing on the Holy Table, and with difficulty, I persuaded those who owned it to tear it up and bury it in the earth. From this experience, I have come to the point of writing these things to you and of showing that it is not right that there be depicted on the Table upon which Christ—Who brings to an end and wipes out idols and their sacrifices and Who is the purifier of all uncleanliness—idols and their sacrifices and all the pollution and filth of the error of the gods and goddesses of the pagans. Therefore, it is not right that this take place without examination and discernment: namely, that on account of the fineness of the fabric and the excellence of the weave and of the image which is on it, it be [used] for the sacred elements, for it is more profitable that the Holy Altar be used without any covering at all than with these things.'

[729] Mardin 310, fol.s. 200b-201a: ܐܕܝ, ܫܝ̈ܫܐ ܐܘ ܕܡܪܡܪܐ ܕܙܓܘܓܝܬܐ ܕܢܦܠ ܠܗ ܒܗܘܢ ܡܘܪܘܢ: ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܬܬܒܪܝܢ ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܛܢܦ ܐܢܘܢ ܘܫܚܝܢ ܘܡܣܪܚ ܪܝܚܗܘܢ. ܡܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܡ̈ܐܢܐ ܕܡܘܪܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܡܪܬ. ܐܢ ܬܒ ܡܬܬܒܪܝܢ ܘܕܙܓ ܐܢܘܢ: ܢܬܛܡܪܘܢ ܒܓܘ ܐܪܥܐ. ܟܕ ܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܡܡܪܚ ܠܡܙܒܢܘ ܡܢ ܙܓ̈ܘܓܝܬܗܘܢ ܠܗܢܘܢ ܕܦܠܚܝܢ ܙܓ̈ܘܓܝܬܐ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܒܟܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܘ ܕܐܣܐܡ̈ܐ. ܢܬܝܗܒܘܢ ܠܐܘܡܢ̈ܐ ܟܪ̈ܝܣܛܝܢܐ ܘܢܗܦܟܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܘܢܬܩܢܘܢ. ܘܠܗ̇ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܕܠܗ̇ ܕܡܘܪܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܢܥܒܕܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ. ܘܠܐ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܐܚܪܬܐ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܒܪܝܢ: ܐܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܘܫܚܝܢ ܘܡܣܪܚ ܪܝܚܗܘܢ. ܢܬܬܫܝܓܘܢ ܠܓܘ ܒܓܘ ܐܘܪܕܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܥܡܘܕܝܬܐ. ܘܗܘܝܢ ܠܗ̇ ܟܕ ܠܗ̇ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ. (cf. Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 130, 132). 'Addai: With respect to vials of marble or glass into which the myron has been placed, some of which have been broken and some of which are dirty and stale and smell awful, what should happen to them? Jacob: As for the vessels of the holy myron which you have spoken about: if they are broken up and made of glass, let them be buried in the earth with nobody having the audacity to sell their some of their glass to glass workers. If they are made of tin or silver, let them be given to Christian craftsmen and they will restore them and re-make them for the use of the holy myron. If they are not

Given its enormous power, it should come as no surprise that Jacob would be concerned with controlling just who could administer the Eucharist and where it could be taken. Stylites should not celebrate the Eucharist on their pillars, nor should they convene congregations for the liturgy there as well.[731] Recluses and solitaries were only allowed to celebrate the Eucharist under extreme circumstances.[732] In accordance with an ancient custom, it was appropriate for God-fearing laymen and chaste women to take the Eucharist to sick people in their homes.[733] It was only lawful for male deacons to put the Body into the cup; female deacons were not allowed to do this. Theirs was to look after sick women.[734] Addai had asked about people taking the empty chalice into

broken, but dirty and rancid and foul smelling, let them be thoroughly washed in the baptismal font and then used for the same purpose.'

[730] Mardin 310, fol. 201a: ܐܕܝ: ܐܦ ܩ̈ܫܝܐ ܘܩܢܩܢ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܒܘܪ̈ܟܬܐ ܐܘ ܡ̈ܐܢܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ: ܐܘ ܕܐܬܬܒܪܘ ܐܘ ܛܢܦܘ: ܐܘ ܣܢܝܢ ܘܣܪܝܚ ܪܝܚܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܢܓܒ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܗܘܢ. ܡܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܥܒܕ ܡܢܗܘܢ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܡ̈ܐܢܐ ܕܒܘܪ̈ܟܬܐ ܕܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ. ܠܐ ܢܫܬܒܩܘܢ ܗܟܢܐ ܒܡܫܐܝܬ ܒܥܕ̈ܬܐ: ܘܡܛܠ ܕܛܢܦܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܘ ܡܕܡ ܐܚܪܢܝ ܕܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܘܠܐ ܡܢܝܚ. ܢܗܘܘܢ ܒܗܬܬܐ ܠܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܬܒܝܪܝܢ. ܢܬܛܡܪܘܢ ܒܓܘ ܐܪܥܐ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܫܠܝܡܝܢ. ܢܬܚܠܠܘܢ ܒܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܒܕܘܟܬܐ ܕܟܝܬܐ. ܘܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܗ ܠܗܝ ܚܫܚܬܐ. ܐܘ ܠܡܫܚܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܨܠܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܠܡܕܡ ܕܐܟܘܬ ܗܢܐ. ܐܢܫ ܕܝܢ ܐܢ ܨܒܐ ܕܢܚܫܚ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܦ ܠܡܘܪܘܢ ܩܕܝܫܐ: ܟܕ ܡܬܚܠܠܝܢ ܚܦܝܛܐܝܬ. ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܟܠܐ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܡܘܪܘܢ: ܠܒܘܪ̈ܟܬܐ ܕܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܠܐ ܙܕܩ. 'Addai: With respect to the marble containers or vials of blessings—or other vessels—which have either been broken or are dirty, or which are foul and bad-smelling, or the contents of which have completely dried up: What should we do with them? Jacob: Let the vessels of the blessings of the saints not remain neglected this way in the churches, such that, on account of their filthiness or something else which is not good and pleasing, they be a source of shame for Christians. Instead, if they are broken, let them be buried in the earth. If they are intact, let them be washed with diligence in a clean place and let them be [used] for the same thing—either the oil of prayer or for something like this. If a person wants to use them for the holy myron, nothing prevents this when they have been thoroughly washed. But those [containers] of the myron should not be used for the blessings of the saints.'

[731] Mardin 310, fol. 209a: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܐܣܛܘܢܝ̈ܐ ܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܩܘܪ̈ܒܢܐ ܥܠ ܐܣܛܘ̈ܢܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܢܟܢܫܘܢ ܟܢܘ̈ܫܝܐ ܠܘܬܗܘܢ. ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܣܬܥܪ̈ܢ ܒܟܢܘ̈ܫܝܐ ܕܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܟܕ ܡܩܪܒܝܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܒܫܠܝܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ❖ 'Stylites should not offer up Eucharists on their pillars, nor should they convene gatherings in their presence [to celebrate the liturgy]. Let those things which are done in assemblies in their presence when they are offering up the Eucharist remain in silence.'

[732] Mardin 310, fol. 209a: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܚܒܝ̈ܫܐ ܕܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܐܠܨ̈ܢܘܬܐ: ܐܘ ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܒܩܘܪܒܢܐ: ܐܢ̈ܫܐ ܕܡܥܠܝܢ ܠܗ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ 'Recluses should not celebrate the Eucharist apart from dire circumstances, or when they are not present at the Eucharist people who will give them [i.e., bring to them] the Eucharist.' (lit., 'bring to him the Eucharist.')

[733] See Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 106, 108 (n. 689, above).

[734] Mardin 310, fol. 199b: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܫܠܝܛ ܠܡܫܡܫܢܝܬܐ ܕܬܪܡܐ ܡܢܬܐ ܡܢ ܦܓܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܒܟܣܐ ܗܘ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ: ܐܡܝܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܠܡܫܡ̈ܫܢܐ ܢܚܡܘܢ ܠܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܠܗ ܟܠ ܟܠܗ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܝܬܐ ܕܡܕܒܚܐ

homes or the girdle (ζωνάριον) of the altar to help combat the physical pain of a sick person or a woman giving birth; for Jacob this was unacceptable. It was not even appropriate for a sick person to come into church and touch the sacred vessels in an attempt to find a cure. He would, however, permit a priest to take the Gospel into a home and press it against a sick person.[735]

But some people were going too far in restricting access to the Eucharist. Midwives were being kept out of church and prevented from taking the Eucharist after helping women give birth, a practice Jacob rejected.[736] Women who had given birth to boys were being kept from church for forty days after delivery; in the case of girls, it was eighty days. Jacob, for his part, ordered that they be allowed into church as soon as they rose up from their beds and washed themselves.[737]

ܐܬܠܝܗ̇. ܐܠܐ ܕܢܫ̈ܐ ܟܪ̈ܝܗܬܐ. 'Addai: Whether it is lawful for a deaconess to place a portion from the Holy Body into the holy cup, as the deacons do. Jacob: It is not lawful at all, for a deaconess is not part of the altar, but sick women are her purview.' Jacob's next canon, fols. 199b-200a (Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 126), enumerates the responsibilities of a deaconess: she sweeps the sanctuary, lights the lamps in the sanctuary (both of these things when there is not a priest or a male deacon nearby); in a nunnery, she takes the mysteries out of the tabernacle because there is no priest or male deacon and gives them only to her female companions or to young children present. She is not, however, allowed to take the Mysteries from the altar and not allowed to place them on the altar and she is not allowed to even touch them. When adult women are baptized, she anoints them with oil and she visits and serves women who are ill.

[735] Mardin 310, fol. 198a, (see n. 735, above).

[736] Mardin 310, fols. 209b-210a: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܠܚܝܬܐ ܣܝܥܬ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܘܠܕܬ ܠܐܢܬܬܐ: ܢܟܠܐ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ. ܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܠܗܘ ܕܐܘܠܕ ܠܚܝܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܠܠܬܐ: ܚܡܪܐ ܐܘ ܬܘܪܬܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ: ܠܐ ܟܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ: ܘܐܢ ܟܗܢܐ ܗܘ ܡܫܡܫ ܬܫܡܫܬܗ ܕܠܐ ܟܠܝܬܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܠܗܝ ܕܠܒܟܬ ܠܡܝܠܕܢܝܬܐ ܟܪܝܣܛܝܢܝܬܐ ܟܕ ܝܠܕܐ: ܟܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܠܐ ܢܡܘܣܐܝܬ܀ 'It is not right that we keep a midwife from church or from communion, because she has helped a woman give birth. Indeed, we do not keep from church someone who has helped an irrational animal—I mean a donkey or a cow—give birth, and if he is a priest, he performs his service with no hindrance. How is it that we unlawfully keep from church one who took hold of a Christian woman as she was giving birth?'

[737] Mardin 310, fol. 210a: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܟܪ̈ܝܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܢܛܪܘܢ ܢܛܘܪ̈ܬܐ ܝܗ̈ܘܕܝܬܐ. ܐܝܬ ܓܝܪ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܫܢ̈ܝܐ ܘܠܐ ܪ̈ܕܝܐ. ܕܐܝܟ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܥܬܝܩܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܘܫܐ. ܠܐܢܬܬܐ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܕܟܪܐ ܐܪ̈ܒܥܝܢ ܝܘ̈ܡܝܢ ܟܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ. ܠܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܝܠܕܐ ܢܩܒܬܐ. ܬܡܢܝܢ ܝܘ̈ܡܝܢ. ܘܗܕܐ ܥܒܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܦܪ̈ܝܫܐܝܬ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܘܡܣܗܕܐܝܬ ܡܕܟܝܢ ܠܥܕܬܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ: ܐܘ ܠܡܬܢܘ ܡܢ ܐܘܟܪܣܛܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܫܟܠܐ ܙܘܚܝܢ. ܠܐ ܠܡܫܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܟܠܘܢ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܐܦ ܝܘܡܐ ܚܕ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܗܝ ܕܝܠܕܐ: ܡܚܕܐ ܕܬܩܘܡ ܡܢ ܥܪܣܗ ܘܬܣܬܚܐ ܢܦܫܗ܀܀ 'Christians should not keep Jewish observances. For there are certain insane and uneducated priests who, according to the ancient law of Moses, keep one who gives birth to a male out of the church for

By Jacob’s day, Christians had worked out a variety of strategies for dealing with sickness, demon possession and other difficulties and non-Christians, too, were aware of the curative resources uniquely available to priests and holy men. Everyone had to grapple with such challenges in his or her life—these were ecumenical concerns, in the broadest sense. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that we find John of Litarb asking Jacob whether it was appropriate for a Christian priest to give the blessings of the saints or a special mixture of dust and oil called the *ḥnānā* to Hagarenes or to pagans who were afflicted by evil spirits so that they might be healed. By all means, Jacob would reply, it was appropriate, very appropriate, that such blessings not be held back from these non-Christians. Let them be given the blessings for whatever sickness. God granting them healing was a clear proof of Christianity’s truth.[738] The ability to win a religious dispute was one thing; miraculous healing, however, was another, much more persuasive argument for one’s confessional position.

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forty days and one who has given birth to a female, eighty days. This they do knowing only how to keep purity or flee from pollution in a fleshly and Jewish way. Those, however, who possess a spiritual understanding, should not keep a midwife from church even one day, nor even the one who gives birth—as soon as she rises from her bed and washes herself [she should be permitted to attend.]’

[738] K.-E. Rignell, *A Letter from Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite of Litarab Concerning Ecclesiastical Canons edited from Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493 with Introduction, Translation and Commentary. Syriac Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Lund, 1979), p. 52: ܝܘܚܢܢ. ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܒܘܪ̈ܟܬܐ ܕܩ̈ܕܝܫܐ ܠܗ̈ܓܪܝܐ. ܐܘ ܠܚ̈ܢܦܐ ܕܡܬܬܚܝܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܪ̈ܘܚܐ ܒ̈ܝܫܬܐ. ܐܝܟܢ ܕܢܫܘܦܘܢ ܘܢܬܐܣܘܢ. ܐܘ ܚܢܢܐ ܒܗ ܒܕܡܘܬܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܙܕܩ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܦܘܪܣ ܘܙܕܩ ܙܕܩ. ܕܠܐ ܢܬܟܠܐ ܠܐܢܫ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܕܢܬܝܗܒ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܛܠ ܟܘܪܗܢܐ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܗܘ. ܦܣܩ ܐܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܠܡܐܡܪ ܕܗܝ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܝܗܒ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܐܣܝܘܬܐ ܟܕ ܬܬܠ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܢܬ ܡܢ ܒܘܪ̈ܟܬܐ. ܡܚܘܝܢܘܬܐ ܓܠܝܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܙܕܩ ܠܟ ܕܬܬܠ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܟܠܝܬܐ. ‘John: Whether it is right for a priest to give the blessings of the saints to Hagarenes or to pagans who are afflicted by evil spirits so that they may rub [them] and be healed? Or [to given them] a similar *ḥnānā*? Jacob: It is by all means right—very right—that something like this not be held back from one of them, but let it be given to them because of sickness, whatever it be. For I permit to say that God’s granting them healing when you give them blessings is a clear demonstration. You should give to them without restraint.’ Rignell’s ET, p. 53, should be used with caution. For the *ḥnānā* as a mixture of oil, water and dust compounded with saints’ relics for the purpose of healing, see R. Payne Smith, et al., *Thesaurus Syriacus*, cols. 1315-1316.

Gatekeepers to the Holy

If he could exert control over the nodes where the sacred connected with every day human life—in the myron, in the blessings of the saints and most importantly, in the Eucharist—Jacob, or any church leader, would have enormous power. They were gatekeepers who controlled access to the power of the holy.[739] Addai tells of a priest whose house was robbed. Enraged at the theft of his property, the priest went into his church, put out the lamps that were burning, turned over the altar, took sacks containing relics of the saints outside, covered the urns containing the bones of saints in ash, and refused to take sacks of relics back in or set the sanctuary right until the saints revealed who the burglars had been.[740] Although the priest's act was aimed at obtaining help from the saints, he had also effectively set an embargo on the holy in his own village in order to smoke out the thieves. Here is a very vivid and immediate

[739] For the use of saints' relics as a means whereby the religious might enforce their will on others in the tenth and eleventh century medieval west, see P. Geary, 'L'humiliation des saints,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 34 (1979), pp. 27-42. I am grateful to Peter Brown for this reference.

[740] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 144: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܐܬܓܢܒ ܒܝܬܗ: ܘܥܠ ܠܥܕܬܗ ܘܡܕܥܟ ܫܪ̈ܓܐ. ܘܡܗܦܟ ܠܛܪܦܙܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܘܡܦܩ ܠܛܒ̈ܠܝܬܐ ܕܣܗ̈ܕܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ. ܘܬܠܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܬܚܝܬ ܫܡܝܐ. ܘܒܕܪ ܩܛܡܐ ܥܠ ܓܘ̈ܢܐ ܕܣܗ̈ܕܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ. ܟܕ ܬܒܥ ܢܩܡܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܘ ܕܓܢܒ ܩܢܝܢܗ ܘܐܡܪ. ܕܠܐ ܢܗܪ ܫܪܓܐ ܒܥܕܬܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܬܪܨ ܡܕܒܚܐ. ܘܠܐ ܥܐܠܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ ܡܢ ܡܛܪܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܬܟܢܫ ܩܛܡܐ ܡܢ ܓܘ̈ܢܝܗܘܢ ܥܕܡܐ ܕܡܚܘܝܢ ܠܡܢܘ ܕܚܠܨ ܒܝܬܝ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܢܐ ܥܒܕܐ ܕܪܘܓܙܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ.. ܘܕܐܬܩܛܪܐ ܕܩܢܝܢܐ. ܥܡ ܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܕܠܐ ܬܘܟܠܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܠܗܐ ܗܘ ܕܙܢܐ ܘܝܗܘܒܐ ܕܩܢ̈ܝܢܐ. ܐܦ ܡܢ ܕܡܢ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܘܗܝ ܬܒܥ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܢܩܡܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܐܙܘ̈ܝܗܝ.. ܡܟܝܠ ܐܦ ܡܟܣܢܘܬܐ ܡܡܫܚܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܗܘ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܠܗ: ܐܦ ܡܚܡ ܒܐܒܕܢܐ ܕܩܢܝܢܗ.. ܥܠ ܕܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܒܥܐ ܥܘܕܪܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܘܡܢ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܘܗܝ: ܐܠܐ ܒܪܘܓܙܐ ܘܒܩܛܝܪܐ. ܘܢܐܠܦ ܕܠܐ ܥܡ ܒܥܠܕܒ̈ܒܘܬܢ ܕܝܠܢ ܘܥܡ ܚܫ̈ܝܢ. ܡܬܬܦܝܣ ܐܠܗܐ ܡܪܚܡܢܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܩܛܘܠܐ ܕܒ̈ܢܝܢܫܐ ܘܒܥܠܕܒܒܐ ܘܣܢܝܐܐ. ܟܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܪܚܡ ܐܢܫܐ܀ 'Addai: Concerning a priest whose house is robbed and who enters into his church and puts out the lamps and overturns the holy table and brings out the sacks of [the relics] of the holy martyrs and hangs them under the sky and sprinkles ash on the urns of the holy martyrs, demanding vengeance from the one who stole his wealth and says: 'A lamp will not be lit in church and the altar will not be set right and these saints will not enter in from the rain and the ash will not be cleaned off their urns until they show who despoiled my house.' Jacob: This is an act of anger and of being attached to possessions. Along with this, [it is an act] of not relying on God who is the Provider and Giver of possessions, even if he has demanded that his vengeance on his plunderers come from His saints. Therefore, he should have a moderate rebuke, even if he is distressed at the loss of his property, on the grounds that he did not seek help from God and His saints through prayer, but rather in anger and through force. Let him learn that God, who is merciful, is not persuaded with our feelings of enmity and our passions to become a killer of humans and an enemy and one who hates, when He is a lover of humanity.'

illustration of the sort of power that a clergyman could have over his community by exercising control over the points where the power of the sacred entered the realm of human existence.

And the power was not just temporal—it extended to the next life. Writing around 690, Anastasios of the Sinai repeats the story of a priest who, suspended from the liturgy by his bishop, went to a different region, where pagans abused him and cut his head off for being a Christian. When the period of persecution came to an end, the Christians of the region dedicated a church to him and his body was placed in a chest. At the consecration of the church, however, each time the bishop began to say the prayers of the liturgy, the box containing the martyr's body moved out of the church on its own accord. As night was coming on, the martyr appeared to the bishop and made a request: 'Have the goodness to make haste to such-and-such city, to my bishop, and make him loose me from my penalty, for he banned me from the liturgy and I am unable to minister with you. And while I have taken up the crown of martyrdom, I have nevertheless not seen the face of Christ, on account of my being under excommunication.'[741] In excommunicating a believer, the Christian clergyman even had the power to deny a martyr direct access to Christ in the next life. No secular authority could wield such power.

By cutting a person off from the Eucharist and other mediators of holy power, a church leader could deny access to the most potent tools available to individuals in the seventh century to cope with challenges and scourges outside of normal human

[741] For the Greek text of the story, see F. Nau, 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase,' pp. 80-81. Quote on p. 81: Ποίησον ἀγάπην καὶ κοπίασον εἰς τὴν δεῖνα τὴν πρὸς τὸν ἐπίσκοπόν μου καὶ ποίησον αὐτὸν λῦσαί με ἐκ τοῦ ἐπιτιμίου, ὅτι ἠφόρισέ με τῆς λειτουργείας, καὶ οὐ δύναμαι συλλειτουργῆσαι ὑμῖν, καὶ τὸν μὲν στέφανον τοῦ μαρτυρίου ἔλαβον, τὸ δὲ πρόσωπον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, οὐκ ἐθεασάμην, διὰ τὸ εἶναί με ὑπὸ ἀφορισμόν.

control. But exclusion from access to the holy required priests who would agree with the doctrinal views on the basis of which such a decision was made and legitimated and who would subsequently do the excluding. A church leader like Jacob could not be in every church at the same time; the ability to bilocate was Christ's alone. In the absence of a chain of authority based on doctrinal consensus, there would be precisely the sort of rampant bureaucratic slippage in implementation which had so exasperated Jacob and drove him to burn the book of canon law and quit his post of bishop.

In other words, without an obedient, trained clergy possessed of a distinctly Miaphysite identity and consciousness, there could never be any hope for a truly distinct Miaphysite church. The creation of such a well-defined Miaphysite leadership and clergy thus required an intellectual and spiritual formation which would differentiate them from the clergy of rival communions. For there to be a separate, defined Miaphysite church in anything more than a notional sense therefore, what was needed was a distinct curriculum of study.

Chapter 7: Creating a Church? As Easy as ABC. Education and Community Formation

In this chapter, my goal will be twofold: I will first seek to sketch out what education looked like in the Syriac-speaking world of the early Middle Ages and then, I will try to ascertain the precise curriculum of study among Miaphysites in this period. Behind all this will be a rather simple argument: forming a distinct educational curriculum for clergy was of fundamental importance to the creation of separate and well-defined Christian communities.

Celebrating the Mysteries went to the very heart of the church's institutional mission and what priests were called to do. In dealing with new priests, for example, Jacob wrote that a periodeute was to admonish them to honor the Mysteries with great care.[742] Moreover, a priest was only permitted to leave the altar to which he had been consecrated in the event of unbearable distress and persecution.[743] But priests had to have at least some instruction if they were to know how to properly carry out this central duty. Indeed, 'uneducated' was a term Jacob would use in his canons to explain the occurrence of aberrant behavior and violations of the canons.[744] In Jacob's short

[742] Mardin 310, fol. 208b: ܠܐ ܘܳܠܶܐ ܠܦܪܝܘܕܘܛܐ̈. ܕܥܠ ܟܗܢܐ̈ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܡܫܡܫܝܢ ܚܕܬܐܝܬ ܢܨܠܘܢ ܨܠܘܬܐ̈. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܣܢܝܩܝܢ ܨܠܘܬܐ̈ ܕܟܝܪܘܛܘܢܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܘܝܢ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ̈ ܥܠ ܟܗܢܐ̈: ܕܢܩܒܠܘܢ ܬܘܣܦܬܐ ܡܢ ܨܠܘܬܐ̈ ܕܦܪܝܘܕܘܛܐ̈. ܠܦܪܝܘܕܘܛܐ ܗܝܕܝܢ ܗܕܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܬܒܥܝܐ ܗܘܬ. ܕܢܬܢܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܟܗܢܐ̈ ܬܫܡܫܬܗܘܢ ܘܨܠܘܬܗܘܢ. ܘܠܡܫܡܫܢܐ̈ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܛܟܣܗܘܢ. ܩܕܡ ܕܢܫܡܫܘܢ. ܘܢܙܗܪ ܐܢܘܢ ܬܘܒ. ܕܢܝܩܪܘܢ ܠܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ̈ ܒܙܗܝܪܘܬܐ. 'It is not right for periodeutes to recite prayers over newly-serving priests, for the prayers of ordination which happen from bishops over priests do not need to receive an addition from the prayers of periodeutes. The only thing at that point that is required from a periodeute is to repeat to the priests their liturgies and prayers and also to the deacons of their rank [i.e., newly consecrated], before they serve, and to admonish them, moreover, to honor the holy mysteries with vigilance.

[743] Mardin 310, fol. 208b: ܠܐ ܘܳܠܶܐ ܕܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܐܘܠܨܢܐ̈ ܘܪ̈ܕܘܦܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܡܣܬܝܒܪܢ. ܕܢܫܒܘܩ ܟܗܢܐ ܠܡܕܒܚܐ ܗܘ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ ܐܬܬܣܝܡ 'It is not right that, apart from distresses and persecutions which are unbearable, for a priest to leave the altar at which he was ordained.'

[744] See Mardin 310, fol. 210a (on uneducated and insane priests who keep women out of church after having given birth; see n. 737 above, for text and translation). Also see Mardin 310, fol. 211a (uneducated people who are lovers of dispute (ܐܢܫܝܢ ܠܐ ܪ̈ܕܝܐ ܘܪ̈ܚܡܝ ܚܪܝܢܐ) are trying to make other rites—e.g., baptism and the consecration of the myron—conform to the rite of the consecration of the Eucharist).

apocalypse, *The Testament of Our Lord*, the disciples implore Jesus to tell them 'how to administer the Mysteries of the Church. For this reason,' they continued, 'we want to learn from your word, our Savior and Perfecter, without omission, how the chief of the consecrated elements and all those who serve in Your Church should be pleasing in Your sight.'[745] Jacob attached the *Testament of Our Lord* as a sort of preface to a work on canon law: a priest had to be taught just what it was that Jesus had commanded about the Holy Things if he was to administer them properly. And it was here, at the point of study, that Miaphysites, Nestorians, Chalcedonians and others might articulate the doctrinal distinctiveness that differentiated them from other, rival groups. Jesus' response to the disciples in Jacob's apocalypse included an emphasis on only giving the Eucharist to the proper people:

> See that you do not give my holy things to the dogs and do not throw pearls before swine as I have commanded you many times. Give not my holy things to degraded and wicked men who do not carry my cross and are not subject (to me). And my commandments shall be derided among them. And it shall be to him that is embittered and does not do them, and gives my words without profit, for the destruction of their souls.[746]

The Eucharist lay at the center of the formation of Christian communities, but the shape those communities took was a function of whom the priests administering the

[745] My translation. A. Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) (Louvain, 1975) p. 8: ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܡܕܒܪܘ ܐܪ̈ܙܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܨܒܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܪܬ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܦܪܘܩܢ ܘܡܫܡܠܝܢܢ. ܨܒܝܢ ܠܡܐܠܦ ܕܠܐ ܒܘܨܪܢܐ. ܕܐܝܟܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܡܫܦܪ ܡܕܒܪܢܐ ܪܫܐ ܕܩܘ̈ܕܫܐ. ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܫܡܫܝܢ ܒܥܕܬܟ ܩܕܡܝܟ cf. the ET in *idem.*, trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162) (Louvain, 1975), p. 32; my construal of this passage differs from that of Vööbus.

[746] Translation A. Vööbus. For the Syriac text, see, *idem.*, *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) (Louvain, 1975) p. 9: ܚܙܘ ܠܐ ܬܬܠܘܢ ܩܘܕ̈ܫܝ ܠܟܠ̈ܒܐ܆ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܡܪ̈ܓܢܝܬܐ ܩܕܡ ܚܙܝܪ̈ܐ ܬܪܡܘܢ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܙܒ̈ܢܝܢ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܦܩܕܬܟܘܢ. ܠܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܬܬܠܘܢ ܩܘܕ̈ܫܝ ܕܝܠܝ ܠܡܫܝ̈ܛܐ ܘܠܒܝ̈ܫܐ ܕܠܐ ܛܥܝܢ ܨܠܝܒܝ ܕܝܠܝ. ܘܠܐ ܡܫܬܥܒܕܝܢ: ܘܢܗܘܘܢ ܠܝ ܕܝܢ ܦܘܩܕ̈ܢܝ ܒܡܘܬܢܐ. ܘܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܗܘ ܕܡܡܪܡܪ ܘܠܐ ܥܒܕ. ܘܝܗܒ ܡ̈ܠܝ ܕܠܐ ܝܘܬܪܢ ܠܐܒܕܢܐ ܕܢܦ̈ܫܬܗܘܢ. Vööbus' ET found in *idem.*, trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162) (Louvain, 1975), p. 33. cf. H.J.W. Drijvers, 'The Testament of Our Lord: Jacob of Edessa's Response to Islam,' *Aram* 6 (1994), p. 113.

Mysteries chose to give it to. The lineaments of the Christian community were therefore a function of the formation of its priesthood.

What can we say about education at this time? In his *Hexaemeron*, Jacob of Edessa put forward the opinion that the proper time for a child to be educated was between the ages of seven and fifteen.[747] Other evidence seems to suggest that all young Christian boys were taught at least some basic reading and writing by a teacher in the village church as well as the study of the Scriptures.[748] And, at a certain age, before the onset of adolescence, there seems to have been an educational fork in the road. Those who were to go on to become priests or monks would continue their studies in a monastery; those who did not have clerical futures would stop at this point.

This at, least, is the pattern set out in the Miaphysite *Life* of Simeon of the Olives. Simeon's father, we are told, brought him to the teacher who was in their village

[747] See I.-B. Chabot, ed., *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron* (CSCO 92: SS 44) (Louvain, 1953), p. 335: ܡܛܠܗܕܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܦܠܐ ܠܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܘܠܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܚܫܚܐ ܛܒ: ܩܘܡܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܕܫܒܘܥܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܫ̈ܢܝܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܢܬܬܪܕܐ ܒܫܒܛܐ ܕܡܪܕܘܬܐ. ܒܠܚܘܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܢܬܩܪܒ ܠܗ̇. ܫܒܛܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܐܘ ܕܚܠܬܐ. ܠܐܘ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܣܩܦܢ. ܒܫܒܘܥܐ ܕܝܢ ܬܪܝܢܐ ܕܫ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܚܝ̈ܐ ܐܢܫ̈ܝܐ: ܡܓܠܐ ܘܡܬܚܘܝܐ ܟܠܗ̇ ܩܘܡܬܐ ܟܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܠܐ ܡܠܝܠܬܐ ܘܡܣܬܟܠܢܝܬܐ: ܗ̇ܝ ܕܢܦܫܐ ܡܬܗܘܢܢܝܬܐ ܕܒܪܢܫܐ: ܘܗܕܐ ܗ̇ܝ ܩܘܡܬܐ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܠܫܚܐ ܠܡܩܒܠܘ ܡܪܕܘܬܐ. ܘܙܕܩ ܠܗ̇ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܬܚܝܬ ܫܒܛܐ ܡܪܕܘܬܐ. ܠܩܘܡܬܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܗܕܐ ܐܦ ܣܟܠܘܬܐ ܡܬܚܫ̈ܒܢ ܐܦ ܬܒ̈ܥܬܐ ܕܕܝ̈ܢܐ ܗܘ̈ܝܢ ܡܢ ܕܝ̈ܢܐ. ܠܛܠܝܐ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܒܪ ܚܡܫܬܥܣܪܐ ܫܢܝܢ. ܘܟܒܪ ܥܠ ܒܗ̇ ܠܬܪܝܢ ܫܒܘܥܐ ܕܫ̈ܢܝܐ. ܡܢ ܫܢܬܐ ܗܟܝܠ ܕܫܒܥ ܘܥܕܡܐ ܠܗ̇ ܕܚܡܫܬܥܣܪܬܐ. ܛܒ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܠܛܠܝܐ ܠܡܐܠܦܘ ܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܐ ܥܕܟܝܠ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܬܪܥܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܚܫܐ ܒܚ̈ܫܐ. ܘܕܣܢܝܩܐ ܠܡܬܪܕܝܘ ܡܢ ܡܪ̈ܕܝܢܐ. 'For this reason then, this period of the first week of years is not useful for teaching and instruction, not even for being taught with the rod of instruction—the rod should only be put forward for the sake of instruction or to cause fear, as it is among those things which cause injury. As for the second week of years in human life [sc. ages 7-14], it discloses and shows forth all the natural state of the rational and cognitive faculty of the intellective soul of a human, and this is the period in which it is proper to receive instruction and [this stage of life] should be under the rod of instruction. In this stage of life, therefore, transgressions are also counted and even the punishments of judgements occur at the hands of judges to a child who is fifteen years old and already entered in to the second week of years. From the seventh year, therefore, until the fifteenth, it is very much the case that a child should receive teaching and instruction because he does not yet have a mind which is afflicted by the passions and which requires punishment from those who correct.'

[748] For this, see the quote below from the *Life* of Simeon of the Olives. If this assertion perhaps seems too strongly universal—what about children from families who could not afford to give up their labor while they were being educated?—we can perhaps recognize the provision reported in Simeon's *Life* as more of an aspiration rather than reflecting reality and assume that only children from families who enjoyed a certain level of prosperity might be allowed to receive education.

church when he was a young boy and Simeon learned letters and began to closely study the Bible. At the age of ten, his father took him to the Monastery of Beth Simon of Qartmin. There was a rule which held for the region of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn: 'In the case of each male child that is born in all the region around the monastery, from the age of ten years and above the child is brought by his parents so that he can learn in the school of the holy monastery. Afterwards, if he is willing, he will become a monk or a priest in the world.'[749] This information seems to correspond well to Chalcedonian practice, too: the Fortieth Canon of the Quinisext Council stipulated that a monk should be at least ten years of age.[750]

This educational path—first local instruction, then learning in a monastery—can be seen elsewhere in the seventh and eighth centuries. The hostile seventh-century Syriac *Life* of Maximos the Confessor reports that Maximos—at that point called Moschion—was put in the monastery of Palaia Lavra about the age of nine and was

[749] Mardin 8/259, fol. 105a. ܬܘܒ ܡܘܕܥܝܢ ܠܟܘܢ ܐܚܝ̈ ܘܚܒܝ̈ܒܝ ܫܪܒܗ ܕܢܨܝܚܐ ܘܓܒܝܐ ܡܪܝ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܙܝܬܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܫܡܘܐܝܠ. ܘܡܪܝ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܘܡܪܝ ܓܒܪܐܝܠ: ܘܐܬܬܠܡܕ ܡܪܝ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܕܙܝܬܐ ܒܛܠܝܘܬܗ: ܘܟܕ ܨܒܐ ܐܠܗܐ: ܘܪܒܐ ܛܠܝܐ: ܘܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ ܛܝܒܘܬܐ: ܘܐܬܪܚܡ ܡܢ ܟܠܢܫ ܡܛܠ ܡܝܬܪܘܬܐ ܘܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܝܗܒ ܠܗ ܐܠܗܐ: ܘܐܘܒܠܗ ܐܒܘܗܝ ܠܘܬ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܒܥܕܬܐ ܕܩܪܝܬܗܘܢ ܘܝܠܦ ܟܬܒܬܐ: ܘܫܪܝ ܡܬܗܓܐ ܒܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ: ܘܟܕ ܡܛܐ ܠܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܥܣܪ ܫܢܝ̈ܢ: ܐܘܒܠܗ ܐܒܘܗܝ ܠܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕ̈ ܕܒܝܬ ܡܪܝ ܫܡܥܘܢ ܩܪܛܡܝܢܝܐ: ܕܢܐܠܦ ܒܒܝܬ ܣܦܪܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܐܝܟ ܢܡܘܣܐ ܕܩܕܝܡ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܟܠܗ ܕܛܘܪ ܥܒܕܝܢ: ܕܟܠ ܒܪܐ ܕܟܪܐ ܕܡܬܝܠܕ ܗܘܐ ܒܟܠܗ ܐܬܪܐ ܕܚܕܪ ܠܥܘܡܪܐ: ܡܢ ܕܒܪܐ ܕܥܣܪ ܫܢܝ̈ܢ ܘܠܥܠ ܒܪ ܡܬܝܬܐ ܛܠܝܐ ܡܢ ܐܒܗܘܗܝ ܕܢܐܠܦ ܒܒܝܬ ܣܦܪܐ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ: ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܐܢ ܨܒܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܘ ܩܫܝܫܐ 'We will also confess to you, brothers and beloved, the generation of the splendid and elect Mar Simeon of the Olives, because it was in the holy Monastery of Mar Samuel and Mar Simeon and Mar Gabriel that Mar Simeon of the Olives received instruction in his youth. And when God willed and the child grew and God granted him favor and he was loved by everyone on account of the virtue and knowledge that God bestowed upon him, his father led him to the teacher who is in the church of their village and he learned letters. He began to closely study the Divine Books and when he arrived to the age of ten years, his father led him to the holy Monastery of Beth Simon the Qartminian, to learn in the school of the monastery, according to the rule which was of old in all the region of Tur 'Abdin, namely, 'In the case of each male child that is born in all the region around the monastery, from the age of ten years and above the child is brought by his parents so that he can learn in the school of the holy monastery. Afterwards, if he is willing, he will become a monk or a priest in the world…'

[750] See H.R. Percival, *The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church: Their Canons and Dogmatic Decrees*, vol. 14 of P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church. Second Series* (New York, 1900), p. 384.

taught there by the Abbot Pantoleon.[751] In Palestine, the Chalcedonian Stephen of Mar Sabas (d. AD 794) was taken by his uncle to a lavra for instruction at the age of nine or ten.[752] Jacob of Edessa, a rough contemporary of Simeon, was from a village called 'Ayndābā; in his youth he studied with a periodeute named Kyriakos. When, we are told, he had read all the books of the Old and New Testaments and those of the chief doctors of the Church, he went to the monastery of Qenneshre where he became a monk and learned the Psalms in Greek and the recitation of the scriptures and where he trained intensely in correct language.[753] Just as Jacob studied first with a periodeute, George of the Arabs makes mention of his teacher, Gabriel the periodeute, whom he accompanied as a small child.[754] Presumably, like Jacob, George eventually moved on to

[751] Maximos was placed there after his parents had both died. See S.P. Brock, 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor,' *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), pp. 314-315.

[752] See J.C. Lamoreaux, ed. and trans., *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas* (CSCO 578-578: SA 50-51) (Louvain, 1999), (Arabic), pp. 9, 144, (ET) pp. 9, 129.

[753] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. IV, p. 445 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 471 (FT): ܗܢܐ ܐܬܘܗܝ ܗܘܐ ܒܓܢܣܗ ܡܢ ܟܘܪܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝ. ܡܢ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܐ ܥܝܢܕܐܒܐ. ܒܐܬܪܐ ܕ ܓܘܡܐ. ܘܐܬܪܕܝ ܒܛܠܝܘܬܗ ܠܘܬ ܩܘܪܝܩܘܣ ܦܪܝܘܕܘܛܐ ܕܐܬܪܐ. ܓܒܪܐ ܢܟܦܐ. ܘܟܕ ܩܪܐ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܥܬܝܩܬܐ ܘܚܕܬܐ. ܘܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܪܫܢܝܐ. ܗܠܟ ܠܕܝܪܐ ܕܐܦܬܘܢܝܐ ܘܩܒܠ ܒܗ ܐܣܟܡܐ ܕܝܚܝܕܝܘܬܐ. ܘܒܗ ܗܪܓ ܡܙܡܘܪܐ ܒܠܫܢܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܘܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒܐ ܘܠܫܢܐ ܚܬܝܬܐ ܒܗ ܐܬܚܦܛ. 'This one was by his race from the territory of Antioch, from the village which is called "'Ayndābā," in the region of Guma. In his youth, he received instruction with Kyriakos, the periodeute of the region—a chaste man. When he had read all the books of the Old and New [Testaments] and the chief doctors, he went to the monastery of Aphtonia [sc. Qenneshre] and in it received the monastic garb, and in it he assiduously studied the Psalms in Greek and the recitation of the scriptures and precise language...' Compare Jacob's learning of the Psalms in Greek with John of Tella's (d. 538) learning them in Syriac (E.W. Brooks, ed., *Vitae Virorum apud Monophysitas Celeberrimorum* (CSCO SS Series Tertia 25) (Paris, 1907), p. 43): ܘܝܠܦ ܐܦ ܡܙܡܘܪܐ ܣܘܪܝܐܝܬ 'And he learned the Psalms in Syriac.' NB: John (p. 39) had been educated in 'the writing and wisdom of the Greeks.' ܘܪܕܝ ܠܗ ܒܣܦܪܐ ܘܒܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ.

[754] See BL Add. 12,154, fol. 261b (section 8.1.5 in my edition): ܕܬܕܥ ܕܝܢ ܐܚܘܬܟ. ܕܟܘܬ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܢܐ ܠܚܕ ܙܒܢ. ܐܦ ܒܩܪܝܬܐ ܢܝܪܐ ܕܒܥܘܡܩܐ ܕ ܓܢܕܪܝܣ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܠܬܝܡܢܐ ܡܢ ܢܗܪ ܥܦܪܝܢ. ܕܩܕܡ ܫܢܝܐ ܢ̄ ܒܩܘܪܒ: ܟܕ ܣܥܪ ܗܘܐ ܠܟܘܪܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ: ܗܿܘ ܕܥܡ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܡܪܝ، ܣܪܓܝܣ ܙܟܘܢܝܐ: ܕܢܩܦ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܒܗܿ ܒܣܥܘܪܘܬܐ: ܐܦ ܪܚܡ ܐܠܗܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܦܪܝܘܕܘܛܐ ܡܪܝ، ܓܒܪܐܝܠ. ܘܐܢܐ ܢܩܦ ܗܘܝܬ ܠܪܒܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܕܐܬܕܟܪ ܟܕ ܥܕܟܝܠ ܛܠܝܐ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܐܝܬܝ، ܗܘܝܬ... 'But, just so you know, O Brother, something like this happened once [before]. About 50 years ago, in the village of Nīra, which is in the valley of Gandarios (that is, south of the 'Aphrīn River), when he who is among the saints, Bishop Mār Sergios Zakūnāyā, was visiting the territory (χώρα) of Antioch, my God-loving master, the periodeute Mār Gabriel was accompanying him. I myself was accompanying my above-mentioned master, being as yet still a young child...'

Qenneshre for more advanced instruction. We also learn from the *Life* of Athanasios Gamolo preserved by Michael the Syrian, that once Athanasios (d. 631) and his brother Severos had received a good education, their pious mother Joanna dedicated them to the monastery of Qenneshre where they received superior training in the recitation of the Scriptures.[755] Isho‘yahb III's desire to build a school at the monastery of Beth ‘Ābe which I cited above seems to have been a departure from the dominant model which was two tiered: first training in a school, then later in monastery. Such an innovation would explain the anger that Isho‘yahb's plans aroused in the monks at Beth ‘Ābe: ‘It is not good for [us] monks, while dwelling in our cells, to be disturbed by the sound of the chanting of the psalms and the singing of the hymns and the offices, and by the noise of the voices of the school boys and of those who keep watch [by night],' the monks of Beth ‘Ābe are reported to have told the Catholicos, alluding to the basic education in the Psalms and the liturgy which was the stuff of elementary education. ‘We have neither found it in writing, nor have we received it by report that such a thing as this ever took place in any of the monasteries of the fathers.' The monks go on to implore the Catholicos to build his new school in some town or village: ‘the whole land of Persia is thy dominion, build then wheresoever thou wishest; but in this monastery a school shall not be built.'[756]

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[755] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 388 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 376 (FT): ܘܟܕ ܒܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܛܒܬܐ ܐܬܬܠܡܕܘ. ܩܪܒܬ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܒܥܘܡܪܐ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܒܪ ܐܦܬܘܢܝܐ. ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܩܢܫܪܝܢ. ܘܬܡܢ ܒܡܩܪܝܢܘܬܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܡܝܬܪܐܝܬ ܐܬܕܪܫܘ... ‘And when they had been instructed with a good education, she [sc. their mother] presented them to God at the holy monastery of Bar Aphtonia which is called ‘Qennesrin' [sic], and they were superbly trained there in the recitation of the Scriptures.' NB: Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1, col. 259, states that Athanasios was ‘from the monastery of Bar Aphtonia, which is called “Qenneshrin”' ܡܢ ܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܒܪ ܐܦܬܘܢܝܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܩܢܫܪܝܢ

[756] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 148, 149. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 75: ܠܐ ܫܦܝܪ ܗܘ ܕܝܚܝ̈ܕܝܐ

Writing in his *Nomocanon* in the thirteenth century, Bar Hebraeus gives us details about Miaphysite education which seem to suggest that a very similar two-tiered system was in place then as well. He stipulated that bishops should, 'before everything,' appoint teachers everywhere where there were none. Teachers were supposed to write down names of children who were suitable for instruction and order their parents to enter them into school, by compulsion if necessary. The education of poor students was to be supported by the church. If the church itself was poor, its steward was to take a collection for the students each Sunday. The teacher himself was to be paid partly by the church and partly by the parents of the students.

According to Bar Hebraeus, students were supposed to first study the Psalms of David. Next was the New Testament; after that was the Old Testament. Next, the Doctors of the Church were to be studied and then the commentators. Students who were not going to become priests were to study the Psalms first and then focus their energies reading the yearly lectionary cycle and learning how to chant it with skill. Students who did not have suitable voices, were not to learn any chanting apart from the simple service.[757] We have evidence that an education in the Scriptures and the

ܗܢܐ: ܕܒܪ ܡܬܟܝܢ ܒܡܠܝܘܬܗ: ܬܟܫܝ ܠܗ ܡܫ̈ܬܘܬܐ ܕܫ̈ܠܠܐ ܘܙܘܡܪ̈ܐ ܘܒܡܬ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܘܩܘܡܩܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܘܕܫܡܥܪ̈ܐ. ܠܐ ܟܕ
ܒܡܬܠܐ ܐܡܫܝܚ ܐܦܠܐ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܐ ܡܠܟܝ: ܕܗܘܬ ܗܕܐ ܒܫܢ ܡܢ ܒܡܕܢܪ̈ܐ ܕܐܬ̈ܗܘܬܐ. ... ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܡ
ܕܐܩ̈ܘܡܠܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܒܠܝܦ ܠܚܡܝܐ: ܗܐ ܒܠܗܝܢ ܡܕ̈ܝܢܬܐ ܘܩܘܪ̈ܝܐ ܘܐܘܪܫܠܝܡ: ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܒܠܝܢ ܒܠܗ̇
ܐܪܥ ܦܪܘ. ܒܕܝ ܒܠ ܒܪ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܐܢܫ. ܡܛܠ ܕܒܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܗܢܐ ܠܓܡܪ ܐܩ̈ܘܡܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܒܢܝܢ:

[757] Bedjan, *Nomocanon*, p. 107. ܗܘܕܝܐ. ܒܠ ܪܫ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ: ܩܕܡ ܟܠܡܕܡ: ܡܠܦܢܐ ܟܕ ܕܠܝܬ: ܢܩܝܡ. ܘܢܟܬܘܒ ܫ̈ܡܗܐ ܕܛܠܝ̈ܐ ܕܫܘܝܢ ܠܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ: ܘܠܐܒܗ̈ܝܗܘܢ ܢܦܩܘܕ ܠܡܥܠܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܐ: ܘܐܦ ܒܩܛܝܪܐ. ܘܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܡܣ̈ܟܢܐ ܐܘ ܕ̈ܠܝܠܐ. ܘܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܥܕܬܐ: ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܬܘܪܣܝܬܗܘܢ. ܘܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܡܣܟܢܬܐ: ܪܒܝܬܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܒܥܠܝܕܒܝܬܐ ܡܢ ܡܗܝܡ̈ܢܐ ܢܟܢܫ ܒܟܠ ܚܕܒܫܒܐ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܝ̈ܐ. ܘܐܢ ܪܒ ܡܠܦܢܐ: ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܦܠܓܐ: ܘܡܢ ܐܒܗ̈ܝ ܛܠܝ̈ܐ ܦܠܓܐ. ܗܘܕܝܐ. ܫܪܝܐ ܡܪܢܝܬܐ ܡܟܬܒܢܝܬܐ ܕܕܘܝܕ ܢܒܝܐ: ܡܢ ܚܕܬܐ: ܡܢ ܥܬܝܩܬܐ: ܡܢ ܡܠܦܢ̈ܐ: ܡܢ ܦܫܘܩ̈ܐ. ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܠܡܫܡܫܘܬܐ ܡܬܛܝܒܝܢ: ܒܬܪ ܡܙܡܘܪ̈ܐ: ܦܘܪܫ ܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܫܢܬܐ ܫܠܡܬܐ ܢܝܠܦܘܢ: ܘܢܫܡܫܘܢ ܠܡܙܡܘܪܬܐ. ܘܗܢܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܒܣܝܡ ܩܠܗܘܢ. ܣܓܝ ܡܢ ܩܠܐ: ܠܐ ܢܐܠܦܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܡܫܡܫܢܘܬܐ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܦܫܝܛܬܐ. 'Rule: Let every chief priest, before everything, when there is none, establish a teacher and let him write the names of the children who are suitable for instruction and let him order their parents to enter them into school, even by compulsion. If among them there are needy or poor, let their support

liturgy formed the core of Miaphysite education as far back as at least the early sixth century. John of Ephesus reports that one way Simeon the Mountaineer (d. ca. 541) sought to counter an appalling ignorance of basic Christianity in a mountain village was through educating the youth.

> And from that time among all of them great and low, if the old man wished to tonsure anyone, there was none who presumed to speak; and thenceforth whoever pleased him he would mark and take away without impediment. But for those who had been tonsured he made tablets for writing, and wrote for them; and thus he would thenceforth frequently sit with patience as in a school (σχόλη), and would teach them, boys and girls together. And down to the time when they reached an age at which they might receive harm from one another, within four or five years, they learned the psalms and the scriptures; and thus thenceforward loud choirs were to be heard at the service...[758]

But if we are looking for something that would differentiate the Miaphysite church from its rivals, this type of basic education in the Psalms and the Bible was not necessarily it: for such a pattern of education does not seem to have been unique to the Miaphysites. The *History* of Rabban Hormizd, a Nestorian born in the late sixth or early seventh century, reports that his parents took him to a school when he was twelve years old; he remained at the school for six years, at the end of which he had memorized the Psalms and New Testament by heart. He later went on to become a

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come from the church. If the church is poor, then let the steward of the church collect material for their maintenance each Sunday. As for the wages of the teacher, part of it should come from the church and part from the parents of the children. Rule: In the first place, let them read the Psalms of David, then the New Testament, then the Old Testament, then the Doctors, then the Commentators. If they are not approaching the priesthood, after the Psalms, let them read the yearly lectionary cycle and let them pronounce with expertness. As for those who do not possess a suitable voice, let them not learn any chanting apart from the simple service.'

[758] Translation E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), p. 246: ܘܡܢ ܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܒܟܠܗܘܢ ܪ̈ܘܪܒܐ ܘܙ̈ܥܘܪܐ ܐܠܘ ܢ̈ ܒܥܐ ܗܘܐ ܗܘ ܣܒܐ ܕܢܣܦܪ. ܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܕܡܡܪܚ ܕܢܡܠܠ. ܘܡܟܝܠ ܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܫܦܪ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܪܫܡ ܗܘܐ ܘܕܒܪ ܕܠܐ ܟܠܝܬܐ. ܘܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܬܣܦܪܘ. ܥܒܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܦ̈ܢܩܐ ܠܟܬܒܬܐ. ܘܟܬܒ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܗܟܢܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܒܡܣܝܒܪܢܘܬ ܙܒܢܐ ܣܓܝܐܐܝܬ ܝܬܒ ܗܘܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܐܣܟܘܠܐ. ܘܡܠܦ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܛܠܝܐ ܘܠܛܠܝܬܐ. ܐܟܚܕܐ. ܘܥܠ ܕܐܬܝܘ ܕܢܣܒܘܢ ܕܢܬܚܒܠܘܢ ܡܢ ܚܕ̈ܕܐ ܒܓܘ ܐܪܒܥ ܐܘ ܚܡܫ ܫ̈ܢܝܢ. ܝܠܦܘ ܡܙܡܘܪ̈ܐ. ܘܟܬܒ̈ܐ. ܘܗܟܢܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܩܠ̈ܐ. ܒܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܪ̈ܒܬܐ ܗ̈ܘܝ.. For the date of Simeon's death, see *ibid*., p. 246, note.

monk.[759] When the Nestorian Mar Aba (d. 552) arrived at the school of Nisibis, he first learned the Psalms and then moved on to the rest of the Scriptures.[760] Similarly, the *Life* of the East Syrian martyr and convert from Zoroastrianism Isho'sabran (d. 620-621) informs us that Isho'sabran asked his priest to give him the priest's young son Isho'zeka as a teacher. When the priest consented and Isho'sabran and Isho'zeka were together, the first question, we are told, Isho'sabran asked cut to the heart of the matter of education. 'What part of knowledge,' he asks the youth, 'should a person first learn?' Isho'zeka's answer lays out nicely the Nestorian curriculum of study at the village level in the late sixth and early seventh century. 'The young man said to him,' the *Life* continues,

> a person first learns the letters and then how to read them. Afterwards, he recites the Psalms, and bit by bit, he reads through all the Scriptures. When he has been trained in the recitation of the Scriptures, he sets himself to their interpretation.[761]

Isho'sabran had been a convert from Zoroastrianism and had actually wanted to learn the Psalms orally, apart from reading:

> The Blessed One said to the young man, 'While I am concerned with learning the alphabet, I [could] have learned to recite ten Psalms.' Now, he said this because he was accustomed to recite with his mouth the murmurings of Magianism, for

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[759] See E.A.W. Budge, trans. and ed., *The Histories of Rabban Hôrmîzd the Persian and Rabban Bar 'Idtâ* (London, 1902), p. 14. See p. XII for the approximate date of his birth.

[760] P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha: de trois autres Patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques, Nestoriens* (Paris, 1895), pp. 216-217: ܘܟܕ ܣܠܩ ܘܡܛܐ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܕܢܨܝܒܝܢ: ܥܠ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ ܕܬܡܢ: ܘܐܬܝܩܪ ܠܘܬܗ ܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܡܢ ܚܝ̈ܘܗܝ. ܘܐܠܦ ܕܘܝܕ ܒܡܠܝܠ ܝܘ̈ܡܬܐ: ܘܫܪܝ ܗܘܐ ܩܪܐ ܠܟ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܐܠܗܝ̈ܐ. 'When he went up and arrived in the city of Nisibis, he entered into the holy school which is there and he the study of the Divine Scriptures was more dear to him than his own life. He learned the Psalter [lit. 'David'] in a few days and began the study of the Divine Scriptures...'

[761] J.-B. Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran, écrite par Jésus-Yab d'Adiabène,' *Nouvelles archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires* 7 (1897), p. 525. ܘܟܕ ܐܬܬܘܣܦܘ ܐܚܝ̈ܕܐ: ܫܐܠܗ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ. ܕܡܢܐ ܠܟ ܪܘܚ ܠܗ ܠܐܢܫ ܠܡܐܠܦ ܩܕܡܝܬ ܡܢ ܝܕܥܬܐ. ܘܐܡܪ ܛܠܝܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ. ܕܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ ܠܟ ܝܠܦ ܐܢܫ ܩܕܡܝܬ. ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܗ ܩܪܝܢܗܝܢ. ܘܡܢ ܒܬܪܟܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܙܡܘܪ̈ܐ. ܘܒܐܝܕܐ ܒܐܝܕܐ ܩܪܐ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ. ܘܟܕ ܕܐܬܕܪܫ ܒܩܪܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܐ: ܠܦܘܫ ܩܐ ܡܫܡܠ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ ܡܬܦܢܐ. FT on p. 491. ET also available in A. Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom: The School of Nisibis and Christian Scholastic Culture in Late Antique Mesopotamia* (Philadelphia, 2006), p. 206. I am grateful to Moulie Vidas for bringing this passage to my attention.

the offensive teaching of Zardaousht is not written in intelligible letters. He had asked the young man to orally recite for him verses, and as he received a verse, he would move himself with force, making his neck tremble like the Magians. But the youth held him back from this and said, 'Don't act as the Magians do. Instead, speak only with your mouth while you yourself are still.' And in this way, in a short time he chanted many verses.

After Isho'sabran had learned to recite a number of verses of the Psalms, he and Isho'zeka went to Isho'zeka's father, the priest, and let him know. The priest encouraged Isho'sabran to follow the more typical (Christian) way of education. 'And the priest persuaded him,' the *Life* states,

> to first learn the alphabet, for from it, he would be able to read all of the Scriptures. And [Isho'sabran] was won over and consented, and in a few days he had learned the letters and learned to recite some ten Psalms, and from these, three or four antiphons, and how to perform all the services—night time and day time. He was performing his prayer with great diligence at all times.[762]

Isho'sabran had tried to deviate from the regular pattern of instruction, but was put back on the standard path by his village priest: basic literacy, followed by the Psalms, the Scripture and the liturgy. The fact that village priests and monks of both the Nestorians and Miaphysites (and presumably Chalcedonians) had similar formations in the Psalms and New Testament and the liturgy and perhaps not much else, could be one factor in explaining why they could find it easy to 'cross over' and do work for the opposing team.

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[762] Chabot, 'Histoire de Jésus-Sabran,' p. 525: ܘܗܘ ܛܠܝܐ ܐܡܪ ܠܛܠܝܐ. ܕܟܕ ܚܙܐ ܐܢܐ ܠܟܐܢܘܬ ܐܬܘܬܐ܆ ܬܘܩ ܠܟ ܒܣܦܪܐ ܕܡܙܡܘܪܐ. ܗܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܡܪ܆ ܡܟܠ ܕܟܕ ܗܘܐ ܠܡܠܦܘ ܡܢ ܦܘܡܗ ܕܛܠܝܐ ܕܡܓܘܫܘܬܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܬܟܬܒܐ ܒܐܬܘܬܐ ܕܡܠܝܠܘܬܐ. ܝܘܠܦܢܗ ܠܒܝܫܐ ܕܙܪܕܐܘܫܬ. ܘܐܦܝܣܗ ܠܛܠܝܐ ܕܡܢ ܦܘܡܐ ܢܠܦܝܘܗܝ, ܦܬܓܡܐ. ܘܟܕ ܡܩܒܠ ܗܘܐ ܦܬܓܡܐ. ܦܠܚ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܒܚܝܠܐ. ܟܕ ܡܪܬܬ ܨܘܪܗ ܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܕܡܓܘ̈ܫܐ. ܛܠܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܟܠܝܗ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܘܐܡܪ. ܕܠܐ ܠܟ ܬܥܒܕ ܐܝܟ ܕܥܒܕܝܢ ܡܓܘ̈ܫܐ. ܐܠܐ ܟܕ ܫܠܝܐ ܐܢܬ ܐܡܪ ܒܦܘܡܟ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܘܗܟܢܐ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܒܨܝܪܐ ܠܓܪܦ ܦܫ ܓܘܢܐ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ. ܘܐܬܘ ܥܡܗ ܘܐܘܕܥܘܗ, ܠܩܫܝܫܐ ܥܠ ܗܕܐ. ܘܐܦܝܣܗ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܐܬܘܬܐ ܢܐܠܦ ܩܕܡܝܬ. ܕܡܢܗܝܢ ܡܫܟܚ ܩܪܝܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܬܛܦܝܣ ܘܫܠܡ. ܘܒܝܘܡܬܐ ܩܠܝ̈ܠܬܐ: ܝܠܦ ܐܬܘܬܐ ܘܬܢܝ ܐܝܟ ܥܣܪܐ ܡܙܡܘܪ̈ܐ. ܘܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܥܘ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܬܠܬ ܐܪܒܥ. ܘܐܝܟ ܢܫܡܫ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܕܠܠܝܐ ܘܕܐܝܡܡܐ. ܘܒܫܩܝܠܘܬܐ ܡܫܡܠܝܬܐ ܡܣܬܥܪܐ ܗܘܬ ܨܠܘܬܗ ܒܟܠܥܕܢ ܀ Partial ET can also be found in Becker, *Fear of God and the Beginning of Wisdom*, p. 206, though my construal of this passage differs from Becker's.

But some members of the clergy would receive more than just the basic education. In a somewhat cryptic passage, the *Life* of Simeon of the Olives tells us that 'the youth entered school and became the head of the school on account of his wisdom and knowledge. When he had finished the measure (τάξις) of his instruction in three schools, he was trained until he became the chief chanter.'[763] Simeon seems to have studied in at least three different institutions or perhaps with three different teachers.

I have already cited examples of Athanasios Gamolo, Jacob of Edessa, and most likely, George of the Arabs, going through several stages of education; we see the phenomenon of multiple schools on the Nestorian side, too. The *History* of Rabban Bar 'Īdta, whose life spanned much of the sixth century (ca. 509-ca. 612), reports that his sister first placed him in a school where he learned the Psalms, chanting and the art of copying books and writing. Once he had learned the Psalms and chants and reading and writing, she next took him to another school, in a monastery, where he studied the Bible and Biblical commentaries. Alone in his room, he would read one book a week. He read and memorized the commentaries of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the works of Aba Isaiah, Mark the Monk, Evagrios, Gregory Nazianzen, Palladios, the 'Sayings of the Fathers,' Basil, and the *Book of Heraclides* of Nestorios, which had been, he tells us, recently translated into Syriac from Greek.[764] Here we have a listing of books which

[763] Mardin 8/259, fols. 105b-106a: ܘܥܠ ܛܠܝܐ ܠܒܝܬ ܣܦܪܐ ܘܗܘܐ ܪܝܫܐ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܚܟܡܬܗ ܘܝܕܥܬܗ ܘܟܕ ܫܠܡ ܠܛܟܣܐ ܕܝܘܠܦܢܗ ܒܬܠܬܐ ܐܣܟܘܠܐ ܐܬܕܪܫ ܥܕܡܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܪܝܫ ܩܝܢܐ

[764] See Budge, *The Histories*, pp. 170-176. NB: the text does not refer explicitly to Palladios' 'Paradise of the Fathers,' or the 'Sayings of the Desert Fathers,' only to 'the Book of Histories,' which Budge, p. 175, n. 5, suggests are these two works. For the dates of Rabban Bar 'Idta's life, see *ibid*., p. XXXIII. For this story as illustrative of the system of education, cf. also, F. Nau, 'L'araméen chrétien (syriaque): les traductions faites du grec en syriaque au VII[e] siècle,' *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 99 (1929), pp. 244-245.

resembles something of a curriculum, perhaps, or at least gives us insight into what it was that some Nestorians were reading in the sixth century.

We have some indications on the Miaphysite side as well as to what their canon of authorities might have been at this time. In the late seventh or early eighth century, Jacob of Edessa would write to John of Litarb that he could not effectively respond to a question he had been asked because he did not have the books with him which contained the answer. To answer properly, he said he would have need of the commentaries of doctors like Athanasios, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, John (Chrysostom), Cyril, Severos, Ephrem, Philoxenos, and Jacob (of Sarugh).[765] Another clue as to Jacob's idea of who the proper theological authorities were can be found in his version of the liturgy, where he included prayers of commemoration for Ignatios of Antioch, Dionysios the Areopagite, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Cyril, Philoxenos, Jacob (of Serugh) and Jacob (Baradaeus).[766]

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[765] BL Add. 12,172, fols. 100a-100b. ܠܐ ܡܨܐ ܐܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܢܐ ܚܝܠܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܝ ܡܣܝܡܘܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܡܢܝܢ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܡܠܦܢܐ: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܦܢ̈ܝܬܐ ܕܫ̈ܘܐܠܐ ܕܐܟܘܬ ܗܠܝܢ ܒܟܠܙܒܢ ܕܨܒܐ ܐܢܐ ܥܡܝ. ܡܬܛܝܒܝܢ ܠܝ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܐܦ ܥܠ ܐܝܕܐ ܕܐܢ ܐܬܒܥܝܬ ܠܡܥܒܕ. ܡܢ ܐܢܢܩܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܦܫܩܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܠܒ̈ܫܝ ܓܒ̈ܪܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܘܠܚܟ̈ܝܡܐ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܒܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܡܪܬ ܐܚܘܢ: ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܒܣܝܠܝܘܣ ܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ ܣܘܝܪܝܘܣ: ܐܦܪܝܡ ܦܝܠܘܟܣܢܘܣ ܝܥܩܘܒ... '...I cannot and I am unable because I do not have the ability and neither are the books of the teachers (those in which are found the words of the answers to requests such as this) constantly present with me when I want [them to be], and also [because of] the fact that if I am asked to carry out [something], I should of necessity have all the exegetical works of those God bearing men and expert teachers, just as you have state, brother: Athanasios, Basil, Gregory, John, Cyril, Severos, Ephrem, Philoxenos, Jaocb...' Also, cf. W. Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, (London, 1871), p. 599.

[766] See Cambridge Add. 2887, fol. 33b: ܘܒܗܕܐ ܫܥܬܐ ܐܬܕܟܪ ܡܪܝܐ ܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܬܪܝܨܝ ܫܘܒܚܐ. ܘܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܠܐܝܓܢܛܝܘܣ. ܕܝܘܢܘܣܝܘܣ. ܠܒܣܝܠܝܘܣ. ܠܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ. ܠܐܝܘܐܢܝܣ. ܠܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ. ܠܦܝܠܘܟܣܢܘܣ ܠܝܥܩܘܒ ܘܠܝܥܩܘܒ. ܘܠܫܪܟܐ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܕܢܩܦܘ ܠܥܩܒܬܗܘܢ 'And in this hour, remember Lord the Orthodox doctors, especially Ignatios, Dionysios, Basil, Gregory [Nazianzen], John, Cyril, Philoxenos, Jacob and Jacob and all the rest of all the doctors who have followed their footsteps.' NB: E. Renaudot's LT of this text, *Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio*, vol. 2, (2nd ed.; Frankfurt/ London, 1847), p. 376, only contains one Jacob, not two.

It is here at the higher level of education that the differences between rival groups became more pronounced; distinct theological profiles begin to emerge. As was the case with rudimentary education, our fullest testimony as to what was to be read in terms of a Miaphysite syllabus of study comes from much later, from Bar Hebraeus in his thirteenth-century *Nomocanon*. He offers two lists of the books that are read in the holy church: one of Christian authors, the other of pagan ones. 'Now the books of the doctors which are read in the church,' he begins the first list, 'are the following:

> of Dionysios of Athens: 3 homilies and 10 letters; of Basil: 29 homilies; of Gregory of Nazianzus: two volumes: 47 homilies and 31 various letters; of Severos: three volumes: 124 Cathedral homilies and other letters; of Mar Ephrem and Mar Isaac: 214 *memre*; of Mar Jacob of Sarugh: 182 [*memre*]; and homilies and *memre* of the yearly *ḥūdrā*, most of them of Athanasios, Cyril, Theodotos [of Ancyra] and Erechthios [of Antioch of Pisidia], etc.: 155; Histories of the Fathers and Doctors and Martyrs: 125; the Book of Palladios which is called 'The Paradise': three volumes; The *Hexaemeron* of Basil: 9 homilies; [The *Hexaemeron*] of Jacob of Edessa: seven [homilies], and one theological homily and many of his letters; The commentaries of Mar Ephrem and Mar John [Chrysostom] and Moshe Bar Kepha and Bar Ṣalībī.[767]

The second list is comprised mostly of various works of Aristotle. 'From the teachings of the outsiders [sc. pagans],' Bar Hebraeus continues, the following are to be read:

> The book of Anton of Takrit; the logical works of Aristotle: *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Analytika*, *Apodeitika*, *Topika* (eight sections), *Sophistical Refutations*; *On Poetry*; *On Rhetoric* (three sections); those four Mathematical treatises: they

[767] Bedjan, ed., *Nomocanon*, pp. 105-106: ܘܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܡܠܦ̈ܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܕܝܘܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܕܐܬܢܘܣ: ܬܠܬܐ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܘܥܣܪ ܐ ܐܓܪ̈ܢ. ܕܒܣܝܠܝܘܣ: ܥܣܪܝܢ ܘܛ̄ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ. ܕܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܕܢܨܝܢܙܘ: ܬܪܝܢ ܦܢܩܝ̈ܬܐ: ܐܪܒܥܝܢ ܘܫܒܥܐ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ. ܘܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܡܫܚܠܦܬܐ: ܬܠܬܝܢ ܘܚܕܐ. ܕܣܘܝܪܐ: ܬܠܬ ܦܢܩܝ̈ܬܐ: ܡܐܐ ܘܥܣܪܝܢ ܘܐܪܒܥܐ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܘܬܐ: ܘܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ، ܕܠܐ ܚܘܫܒܢܐ: ܘܐ ܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܐܣܛܢܬܐ. ܕܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ ܘܡܪܝ ܐܝܣܚܩ: ܡܐܬܝܢ ܘܐܪܒܥܣܪ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ. ܕܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܗܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܡܐܐ ܘܬܡܢܝܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ. ܘܬܘܒ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܘܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܚܘܕܪܐ ܫܢܬܢܝܐ: ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܘܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ: ܗܘ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ ܕܦܝܣܝܕܝܐ ܐܘܪܬܝܘܣ: ܘܩܘܪܝܠܘܣ: ܘܬܐܘܕܘܛܘܣ: ܘܐܪܟܬܝܘܣ. ܘܫܪܟܐ: ܡܐܐ ܘܚܡܫܝܢ ܘܚܡܫܐ. ܬܫ̈ܥܝܬܐ ܕܐܒ̈ܗܬܐ ܘܡܠ̈ܦܢܐ ܘܣܗ̈ܕܐ: ܡܐܐ ܘܥܣܪܝܢ ܘܚܡܫܐ. ܘܟܬܒܐ ܕܦܠܕܝܘܣ: ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܦܪܕܝܣܐ: ܬܠܬ ܦܢܩܝ̈ܬܐ. ܘܐܟܬܬ ܫܬܬ ܝ̈ܘܡܐ ܕܒܣܝܠܝܘܣ: ܬܫܥܐ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ. ܘܕܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܘܪܗܝܐ: ܫܒܥܐ: ܘܚܕ ܬܐܘܠܘܓܝܐ: ܘܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܗܘ ܠܒܪ ܡܢ ܗܘ. ܘܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܡܪܝ ܐܦܪܝܡ: ܘܕܡܪܝ ܐܝܘܐܢܝܣ: ܘܡܘܫܐ ܒܪ ܟܐܦܐ: ܘܒܪ ܨܠܝܒܝ Syriac (with LT) also in J.S. Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3.2 (Rome, 1728), pp. 937-938. See also the FT of D.G.K. Taylor, 'L'importance des pères de l'église dans l'oeuvre speculative de Barhebraeus,' *Parole de l'Orient* 33 (2008), pp. 69-71, which is helpful for identifying some of the more obscure names in the list.

gain elegance for the tongue and training for the mind. As for *Natural Hearing* [sc. the *Physics*] and *Metaphysics*, there is only as much material to be taken as we have taken in our book the *Lamp of the Sanctuary*, and that smaller [volume] of *The Rays*, directed at confuting and disputing those who have known God but who have not glorified him as God...[768]

These lists seem to be just a collection of names, perhaps somewhat bewildering. But something interesting happens if the names of authors who wrote in Syriac are removed and the Greek authors and the time of their translation into Syriac is examined. It turns out that not only were a number of these books either translated for the first time or re-translated in the seventh century, but the people who were doing the translating and re-translating were associated, so far as we know, almost exclusively with the monastery of Qenneshre.

To make this striking correlation in time and place more clear, I will reproduce the originally-Greek works of each list, placing in bold those works which were either translated for the first time or re-translated in the seventh or early eighth century. After each work, I will list the (re-) translator, if known, putting an asterisk by his name if he was associated with Qenneshre. Looking at the originally-Greek works of the first list this way, therefore, gives us this picture:[769]

> Now the books of the doctors which are read in the church are the following: **of Dionysios of Athens: 3 homilies and 10 letters** [retranslated by Phokas of

[768] See Bedjan, ed., *Nomocanon*, p. 106: ܘܡܢ ܡܠܦܢ̈ ܒܪ̈ܝܐ: ܒܠܚܘܕ ܗܘ ܕܐܝܣܘܦܘܣ ܠܐ ܟܪܘܬܝܩܐ. ܘܗܘܢ ܡܠܠܝ̈ܐ ܕܐܪܣܛܘܛܠܝܣ: ܩܛܝܓܘܪ̈ܝܣ ܦܪܝܡܢܝܣ: ܘܐܢܠܘܛܝܩܝ: ܘܐܦܘܕܝܩܛܝܩܝ: ܘܛܘܦܝܩܝ: ܐܝܬܝܩܐ ܡܫܡܥ̈ܬܐ. ܘܕܡܟܣܢܘܬܐ ܕܣܘܦܣܛܝܩܐ: ܘܕܒܠ ܦܘܐܝܛܝܩܐ: ܘܕܒܠ ܪܗܛܘܪܝܩܐ: ܬܠܬܐ ܡܫܡܥ̈ܬܐ. ܘܗܘܢ ܐܪܒܥܐ ܡܬܡܠܦܢܝܐ: ܫܘܦܪ̈ܐ ܡܩܢܝܢ ܠܠܫܢܐ: ܘܕܘܪܫܐ ܠܗܘܢܐ: ܡܢ ܕܝܢ ܫܡܥܐ ܟܝܢܝܐ: ܘܗܘ ܕܒܬܪ ܟܝܢܝ̈ܬܐ: ܡܠܐܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܐܝܬ ܠܡܣܒ: ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܚܢܢ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܢܪܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ: ܘܗܘ ܒܥܪܐ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܕܙܠܝܩ̈ܐ: ܠܘܬ ܐܪܓܘܬܐ ܘܕܪܫܐ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܡܬܟܬܫܢܘܗܝ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܕܥܘ ܠܐܠܗܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܐܠܗܐ ܫܒܚܘܗܝ... Syriac text and LT also available in Assemani, *Bibliotheca Orientalis Clementino-Vaticana*, vol. 3.2, pp. 938-939. FT of both lists can be found in A. Juckel, 'La reception des pères grecs pendant la «renaissance» syriaque. Renaissance – inculturation – identité,' in A. Schmidt and D. Donnet, eds., *Les pères grecs dans la tradition syriaque*, (Paris, 2007), pp. 111-112, but cf. Taylor, 'L'importance des pères de l'église,' p. 70, n. 34.

[769] Taylor, 'L'importance des pères de l'église,' pp. 69-71 attempts to give contemporary bibliographic citations and brief discussion for all the authors on Bar Hebraeus' list of Christian writers.

Edessa[770] (possibly c. 684-686);[771] NB: Phokas may have been a friend of *Jacob of Edessa?);[772] there may have also been a Syriac version produced by *Athanasios of Balad];[773]

of Basil: 29 homilies [translator unknown];[774]

of Gregory of Nazianzus: two volumes: 47 homilies and 31 various letters [revision by *Paul of Edessa;[775] revision by *Athanasios II of Balad[776]];

of Severos: three volumes: 124 Cathedral homilies and other letters [revision by *Jacob of Edessa;[777] NB: *Paul of Edessa translated the *Hymns* of Severos in the early seventh century and *Jacob of Edessa revised them later in the same century[778]];

Homilies and *memre* of the yearly *ḥūdrā*, most of them of Athanasios, Cyril, Theodotos and Erechthios etc.: 155;

The Book of Palladios which is called 'The Paradise': three volumes;

The *Hexaemeron* of Basil: 9 homilies [a second translation made in seventh century by *Athanasios of Balad];[779]

The commentaries of... Mar John [Chrysostom]...

Doing the same for Bar Hebraeus' list of pagan works, gives us the following picture:

The logical works of Aristotle:

Categories [*Jacob of Edessa,[780] *George of the Arabs[781]]

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[770] See J.-M. Hornus, 'Le corpus dionysien en syriaque,' *Parole de l'orient* 1 (1970), pp. 69-73 and n. 341, above.

[771] See S.P. Brock, 'Towards a History of Syriac Translation Technique,' *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 21 (Rome, 1983), p. 3; repr. as Chapter X in *idem*., *Studies in Syriac Christianity* (Ashgate, 1992) and *idem*., 'Jacob of Edessa's Discourse on the Myron,' *Oriens Christianus* 63 (1979), p. 21.

[772] See Brock, 'Jacob of Edessa's Discourse on the Myron,' p. 21.

[773] See Timothy I's request to Pethion 'Please search out and copy for us Dionysios in the translation of Athanasios or that of Phokas' (trans. Brock) (cf. n. 184, n. 185, and n. 341, above). 'Please search out and copy for us Dionysios in the translation of Athanasios or that of Phokas,' (trans. Brock). Also cf. I. Barsoum, *al-Lu'lu' al-manthūr fī ta'rīkh al-'ulūm wa-'l-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (repr. Glane, 1975), p. 590.

[774] See Chapter 2, n. 339: '(See P.J. Fedwick, 'The Translations of the Works of Basil before 1400,' in *idem*., *Basil of Caesarea: Christian, Humanist, Ascetic: A Sixteen-Hundredth Anniversary Symposium*, vol. 2 (Toronto, 1981), pp. 449-451 and S.P. Brock, 'Basil's *Homily on Deut. xv 9*: Some remarks on the Syriac manuscript tradition,' in J. Dümmer, ed., *Texte und Textkritik: Eine Aufsatzsammlung* (Berlin, 1987), pp. 62-66. On the homilies, also see S.P. Brock, 'Traduzioni Siriache degli Scritti di Basilio,' in *Basilio tra Oriente e Occidente*, edd. É. Baudry, S. Brock, et al. (Magnano, BI, 2001), pp. 168-173. This latter article contains valuable information about the manuscript tradition of the works of Basil in Syriac.)'

[775] For an accessible introduction to Gregory Nazianzen in Syriac see A. Schmidt, 'The Literary Tradition of Gregory Nazianzus in Syriac Literature and its Historical Context,' *The Harp* 11-12 (1998-1999), pp. 127-134; also see n. 344, above.

[776] This revision may have only been for the first of the two volumes referred to by Bar Hebraeus and is now lost. See J.-C.Haelewyck, *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni Opera. Versio Syriaca I: Oratio XL* (CSCG 49: Corpus Nazianzenum 14) (Turnhout/Leuven, 2001), p. IX. See also S.P. Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia* (Cambridge, 1971), pp. 30-31.

[777] See Baumstak, *Geschichte*, p. 251.

[778] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 190, 253.

[779] I. Barsoum, *al-Lu'lu' al-manthūr fī ta'rīkh al-'ulūm wa-al-ādāb al-suryāniyya* (repr. Glane, 1975), p. 290, states that references to a translation of Basil's *Hexaemeron* by Athanasios in AD 666-667 can be found in MS Za'farān 241, but cf. also Taylor, 'L'importance des pères de l'église,' p. 70, n. 40.

On Interpretation [*George of the Arabs[782]]
Analytika [*Athanasios of Balad,[783] *George of the Arabs[784]]
Apodeitika [*Athanasios of Balad[785]]
***Topika* (eight sections)** [*Athanasios of Balad[786]]
Sophistical Refutations [*Athanasios of Balad[787]]
On Poetry
On Rhetoric (three sections)
Those four Mathematical treatises: they gain elegance for the tongue and training for the mind.
As for *Natural Hearing* [sc. the *Physics*] and *Metaphysics*, there is only as much material to be taken as we have taken in our book the *Lamp of the Sanctuary*, and that smaller [volume] of *The Rays*...

In Bar Hebraeus' first list—books by Christian authors—all of the originally Greek works which were theological in nature were either translated for the first time in the seventh century or were re-translated in the seventh century. The originally-Greek texts from this list that were not re-translated in the seventh century—the homilies of the *ḥūdrā*, Palladios, and the commentaries of Chrysostom—are all notable for not being located at theological pressure points between rival churches, unlike Ps.-Dionysios, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil and Severos.[788] It was these latter authors that members of rival churches were studying and seeking to claim for themselves and mobilize against their competitors. At some point between 785 and 789, for example, Timothy I would write a letter refuting Cyril of Alexandria's attempt to show Nestorios a heretic based

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780 See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 251.
781 See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 257.
782 See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 257.
783 See F.E. Peeters, *Aristoteles Arabus: The Oriental Translations and Commentaries on the Aristotelian* Corpus (Leiden, 1968), p. 14.
784 See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 257.
785 See S.P. Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy from the Late Eighth Century on Translations From Greek,' *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 9 (1999), pp. 238, 246.
786 See Brock, 'Two Letters of the Patriarch Timothy,' p. 246.
787 See Peeters, *Aristoteles Arabus*, p. 23.
788 On the importance of Gregory Nazianzen to both Miaphysites and Nestorians, see Schmidt, 'The Literary Tradition of Gregory of Nazianzus in Syriac Literature,' p. 131.

on the words of Gregory Nazianzen.[789] As for Bar Hebraeus' second list, of pagan authors, it makes it strikingly clear that the entire *Organon* was translated or re-translated in the seventh century by three men, all of them probably friends,[790] all of them probably hailing from Qenneshre.

Traces of a Curriculum

There seems to be evidence of the study of the group of authors—both Syriac and Greek—on Bar Hebraeus' two lists in the seventh and early eighth centuries; letters once more can provide us with a window into what was on the minds of people at this time. Jacob's letters are included in the canon of Bar Hebraeus, for example, and it seems that within decades after his death, they were already beginning to be discussed and studied. George of the Arabs' eighth letter, written in AD 715, seven years after Jacob's death, is a response to a series of questions asked him by John of Litarb about difficult-to-understand passages in a letter Jacob had written to the Stylite.[791] Basil's *Hexaemeron* was among the books Bar Hebraeus included and we know that it was a work which both Jacob of Edessa[792] and George of the Arabs had read.[793] George was also reading Jacob of Sarugh.[794]

Ephrem, not surprisingly, also made it onto Bar Hebraeus's syllabus and we have evidence which might suggest that his *memre*, or at least certain ones of them, were the

789 See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 272-279. Cf. p. 274: ...ܘܡܚܘܐ ܠܗ ܒܡܚܘܬܐ ܕܗܪܛܝܩܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܡܢ ܡ̈ܠܘܗܝ، ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ: ܗ̇ܢܝܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܐܓܪܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ، ܕܠܘܬ ܩܠܝܕܘܢܝܘܣ 'And he shows that he is a heretic based on the words of the holy Gregory which are in the letter which is to Kledonios.' LT in *idem*., trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), pp. 189-194. For the date of *Letter 39*, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73; also cf. *ibid*., pp. 31-32.

790 See my, 'Between Christology and *Kalām*?,' pp. 674-677

791 See BL Add. 12,154, fols. 272b- 278a (sections 11.1.1-11.9.2 in my edition).

792 See M. Wilks, 'Jacob of Edessa's Use of Greek Philosophy in His Hexaemeron,' in B. ter Haar Romeny, *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (Leiden/Boston, 2008), pp. 223-238, esp. p. 224.

793 See his citation of it in his *Letter 11*, BL Add. 12,154, fol. 290a (section 14.2.1 in my edition).

794 See BL Add. 12,154, fols. 249b, 258a (*Letter 4*; sections 7.3.5 and 7.7.4 in my edition).

object of study in the seventh and eight centuries. George's eleventh letter offers an explanation of a cryptic passage in Ephrem's Hymn 44 *On Faith* to a correspondent named Abraham.[795] In Jacob's fifth letter to John of Litarb, he responds to a question from John about the meaning of the same Hymn 44, even focusing his attention on precisely the same delphic half dozen or so lines in the Hymn which George would attempt to explain in his letter to Abraham.[796] A common canon or curriculum of study is one possible explanation for this curious coincidence. In the middle of the seventh century, Severos Sebhokt wrote to Yonan the periodeute to answer questions about the meaning of terms in the περὶ ἑρμηνείας and Ἀναλυτικὰ πρότερα;[797] he would also write to a priest named Aitīlāhā of Nineveh explaining the meaning of certain key terms in the περὶ ἑρμηνείας.[798] Such correspondence suggests that Miaphysite clergy in the mid-seventh century were studying at least part of the *Organon* of Aristotle.

We know that the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen were being studied at this time: in the sixth letter of George of the Arabs, George writes to his synkellos Jacob to explain two unclear passages in these homilies. In both cases, George offers alternate and superior translations to the Syriac that Jacob had available.[799] We also know that George was familiar with the mythological scholia of Pseudo-Nonnos, a sixth-century composition which explained mythological allusions in four of Gregory's homilies and

[795] See BL Add. 12,154, fols. 290a-290b (sections 14.1.1-14.2.6 in my edition)

[796] See BL Add. 12,172, fols. 85b-87b. Compare esp. fols. 87a-87b with George's *Letter 11*.

[797] See Cambridge Add. 2812, fol. 109a: ܟܬܒܐ ܐ ܐܓܪܬܐ ܕܣܘܝܪܘܣ ܣܒܘܟܬ ܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܢ ܦܪܝܘܕܘܛܐ ܗܘ ܕܗܘܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܐ ܕܬܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܚܢܘܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܕܡ ܕܒܦܪܝܡܢܝܐܣ ܕܐܪܝܣܛܘܛܠܝܣ ܦܝܠܣܘܦܐ ܘܒܐܢܠܘܛܝ̈ܩܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ... 'I write the letter of Severos Sebokht to Yonan the periodeute, who became the bishop of Tella, concerning certain expressions which are in the *On Interpretation* of Aristotle the philosopher and in the *Priory Analytics*...'

[798] See n. 133, above.

[799] See BL Add. 12,154, fols. 263a-264b (sections 9.1.1-9.3.1 in my edition). Also, cf. n. 398, n. 399 and n. 401.

which, in the manuscript tradition, was attached to and transmitted with the homilies.[800]

George himself seems to have studied the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen with Athanasios II of Balad. In his *Letter 6*, to Jacob, he states that the meaning of the passage in question was clearer in the way that the Patriarch Athanasios had translated for him.[801] George was also most likely the compiler of a collection of scholia on the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen. Perhaps the strongest piece of evidence suggesting that George is the compiler of this work is a striking parallel between it and George's letters. In explaining a passage in Gregory's *Homily 2*, the compiler of the scholia breaks into the first person and invokes a translation made for him by the Patriarch Athanasios II. This passage in Gregory's *Homily 2* is precisely the same passage which caused George to switch to the first person in his *Letter 6* and reference a translation made for him by the Patriarch Athanasios.[802] Wright did not recognize the uncanny similarity between the first-person passage in the letters of George and the first-person passage in the collection of scholia, but he was nevertheless able to adduce other reasons for believing

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[800] See Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, p. 30, n. 4.

[801] See n. 400 and n. 401, above.

[802] See BL Add. 14,725, fol. 132a: ܠܘܩܕܡ ܗܟܝܠ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܢ [ܐܡܪܢ] ܡܢ ܗܕܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܕܢܙܗܪ ܘܫܘܠܡܗܘܢ. ܕܐܬܘܬܗ̇ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܦܘܫܩܗ̇ ܕܡܠܬܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܒܩܕܝܫ̈ܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܦܫܩ ܠܝ ܘܫܪܝܐ ܗܟܢܐ❖... '"In the first place, of those things which we have said, this one merits caution,' and the rest of the passage, whose meaning is as Patriarch Athanasios, who is among the saints, explained to me in the following way...' Text also available in Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 443. Compare this passage with BL Add. 12,154, fols. 263a, 263b (sections 9.1.2 and 9.1.4 in my edition): ܡܛܠ ܕܫܐܠܬܢܝ ܐܘ ܒܪܐ ܕܝܠܝ ܪܘܚܢܐ ܘܟܗܢܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܡܛܠ ܡܠܬܐ ܚܕܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܬܐܘܠܘܓܘܣ: ܐܝܕܐ ܕܣܝܡܐ ܒܡܐܡܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܦܩ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܡܛܠ ܟܗܢܘܬܐ: ܗܘ ܕܥܒܕ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܡܢ ܦܘܢܛܘܣ ܦܢܐ: ܗܝ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܟܢܐ: ܠܘܩܕܡ ܗܟܝܠ ܡܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܡܪܢ ܗܕܐ ܫܘܝܐ ܕܢܙܗܪ: ܕܠܐ ܢܬܚܙܐ ܨܝܪ̈ܐ ܒܝܫܐ... ܐܬܘܬܗ̇ ܡܟܝܠ ܗܘ ܦܘܫܩܗ̇ ܕܡܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܝܬܝܪ ܠܒܝܫܐܝܬ ܘܚܬܝܬܐܝܬ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܐܦ ܗܘ ܕܒܩܕܝܫ̈ܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܦܫܩ ܠܝ ܗܟܢܐ+ '[I write] since you asked me, O my spiritual son and priest, Mār Jacob, about a certain passage of Gregory the Theologian's (θεολόγος) which is located in that apologetic homily concerning priesthood, which he composed when he returned from Pontus and which runs as follows: "Indeed, first of all, of the things we have spoken, this one merits caution: that we not appear bad painters..." Now, the rendering of this passage is more apt and precise in the way that Patriarch Athanasios, who is among the saints, explained to me.[802] In the following way...'

that the Bishop of the Arabs was the author of the compilation.[803] This collection of scholia on the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen may very well have been some sort of school text meant to aid students: 'Each homily is preceded by a short introduction,' Wright notes, 'giving an outline of its contents, and a list of the passages of Scripture which are cited in it.' The work also discusses the chronology of the composition of the 47 homilies of Gregory.[804]

Not only had Athanasios II of Balad apparently offered George of the Arabs instruction on at least some of the *Homilies*; he had written about them himself. George's collection of scholia preserves a scholion by Athanasios explaining their organization and Athanasios himself produced a corrected version of the revised translation of Paul of Edessa made in 623-624.[805] Jacob of Edessa, too, has been credited with producing some sort of corrected edition of the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen, but the state of the manuscript evidence is such that it is impossible to tell what exactly it was that Jacob left behind—an improved version, or simply marginalia.[806]

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[803] See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 443.

[804] See Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 441.

[805] See BL Add. 14,725, fol. 103a, in Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 441, the introductory note to the scholia of Athanasios reproduced in the collection of scholia on the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen likely compiled by George of the Arabs: ܥܘܢܝܐ ܕܡܬܡܠܠܐ ܩܕܡ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܬܐܘܠܘܓܐ ܗܘ ܕܥܒܝܕ ܠܗ ܠܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܡܦܫܩܢܐ ܘܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ ܕܐܢܛܝܘܟܝܐ ܕܣܘܪܝܐ. 'The subject which is discussed before the book of the Theologian composed by Athanasios, the interpreter [or translator] and Patriarch of Antioch of Syria.' Also see BL Add. 12.153, fol. 121a in Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2, p. 441, p. 425: ܫܠܡܘ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܚܕܬܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܬܪܨ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܦܛܪܝܪܟܐ: ܒܬܪ ܡܝܩܪ ܡܢ ܐܠܗܐ ܢܟܦܐ ܐܚܘܢ ܡܪܝ، ܦܘܠܐ. 'The new explanations which Athanasios the Patriarch corrected after the God-honored, venerable Paul, are ended.' For Athanasios and the *Homilies*, see Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, pp. 30-31. It is also worth mentioning that George of the Arabs was aware of the *Homilies* as well as the *Mythological Scholia of Ps.-Nonnos*, which was attached to the *Homilies* (*ibid*., p. 30 and p. 30, n. 4); Severos Sebokht, too, was aware of the *Homilies*, probably in the translation of Paul of Edessa (*ibid*., p. 29, n. 7).

[806] See Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, pp. 31-32. On p. 32, n. 1, Brock reproduces the portion of the colophon of BM Or. 8731 which credits Jacob with a 'correction' or 'edition' of the *Homilies* in Syriac.

George, Athanasios and Jacob were not the only figures who were intensely interested in the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen in the seventh century and an ecumenical interest in Gregory suggests another factor driving at least some of the translational activity of the seventh century: the need of Syriac-speaking Christians to play catch-up with Greek-speaking rivals who enjoyed the luxury of having theological authorities available in their own tongue. In the late eighth century, the Chalcedonian Michael the Synkellos was able to receive a traditional education in grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, poetry and astronomy in Jerusalem.[807] And in the seventh century, the Chalcedonian Maximos the Confessor, also from Palestine, would compose scholia in Greek on Ps. Dionysios—another author on Bar Hebraeus' syllabus—and also a work on difficult passages in Ps. Dionysios and Gregory Nazianzen.[808]

Around the same time, Maximos' contemporary Severos Sebokht (d. 666-667), who represented the generation of scholars at Qenneshre before Athanasios II of Balad and, indeed, who was Athanasios' teacher,[809] was also concerned with the Theologian, as Gregory was referred to. In a letter to the periodeute Yonan of Tella, Severos Sebokht thanked Yonan for sending along to him a manuscript containing the letters of Basil and Gregory which he had been trying to obtain from the members of Yonan's monastery for a long time.[810] It is also worth noting that Januarios Kandidatos, a

[807] For this, C. Foss, 'Byzantine Saints in Early Islamic Syria,' *Le Muséon* 125 (2007), p. 115.

[808] *PG* 4: 15-432, 527-576; *PG* 91: 1061-1418. cf. Beck, *Kirche und Theologische Literatur*, p. 438.

[809] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, col. 287 and n. 658, above.

[810] See Cambridge Add. 2812, fol. 109b: ܡܛܬ ܕܝܢ ܐܟܚܕܐ: ܘܐܦ ܠܝ ܣܘܟܐ ܕܬܪܬܝܢ ܐ ܓܪܬܐ ܕܙ: ܕܙܘ ܓܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ: ܕ ܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܘܕܒܣܝܠܝܘܣ: ܗܘ ܕܥܡ ܕܐ ܓܪܬܟ ܐܚܝܕܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܗܘܐ: ܗܘ ܕܙ̈ܒܢܬܐ ܣܓ̈ܝܐܬܐ ܒ̇ܥܝܬ ܠܡܢܝܢܐ ܡܢ ܐܚ̈ܝܢ ܕܐܝܠ ܒ̈ܢܝ ܕܝܪܟ ܗܘ ܩܕܝܫܐ. ܕܢܫܬܕܪ ܠܝ. ܘ̇ܠܚܘܕܝܗ ܗܫܐ ܒܝܕ ܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ ܕܐܚܘܬܟ ܐܬܡܛܝ ܠܘܬܝ... 'Now, I have received at the same time a second codex, letters of the divine pair—of Gregory and Basil—which was bound together with your letter [and] which I had many times requested from a number of our brothers, the inhabitants of your holy monastery, be sent to me. And only now, through your diligence, o brother, it has arrived to me...' NB: George of the Arabs also

contemporary of Severos Sebokht,[811] produced a translation of the poems of Gregory Nazianzen in 665;[812] Wright suggested that Januarios was from Qenneshre.[813] The poems were translated again in 804 by Theodosios of Edessa, another product of Qenneshre.[814]

These are all hints at what Miaphysites were studying in the seventh and eighth centuries. Combined with the striking fact that so many of the works on Bar Hebraeus' syllabus were translated either for the first time or retranslated in the seventh century by somebody who had been trained at Qenneshre, one is tempted to suggest that Bar Hebraeus' thirteenth-century enumeration has as an ancestor a Miaphysite curriculum of study that first took shape hundreds of years earlier, in the seventh century, perhaps at the monastery of Qenneshre or perhaps at Qenneshre and several other important Miaphysite monasteries.[815]

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uses the expression ܝܗ ܠܐ ܐܠܗܐ to refer to Basil and Gregory; see BL Add. 12,154, fol. 256a (section 7.6.11 in my edition) and also K. McVey, *George Bishop of the Arabs: a Homily on Blessed Mar Severus, Patriarch of Antioch* (CSCO 530: SS 216) (Louvain, 1993) lns. 251-252 (p. 11).

811 See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 435 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 453.

812 For this date, see I. Guidi, 'Di un' Iscrizione Sepolcrale Siriaca e della Versione dei Carmi di S. Gregorio Nazianzeno fatta da Candidato di Âmed,' in *Actes du dixième congrès international des orientalistes. Session de Genève 1894*, part 3 (Leiden, 1896), p. 78. An eighth-century Syriac inscription from Amid contains both the κανδίδατος (based on an emendation Guidi suggests) and πατρίκια, which leads Guidi to argue (p. 77) that these titles point to the existence of a family of Greco-Roman origin which at one point, probably in the reign of Anastasios, helped direct political matters in the region of Amid. (Januarios was from Amid, too). See also Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 259.

813 See Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature* (London, 1894), p. 156.

814 Theodosios was the brother of Dionysios of Tellmaḥre (see Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, col. 361) and Dionysios had been from Qenneshre (ibid., col. 347). Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 276 and Wright, *A Short History of Syriac Literature*, p. 203, assume he was trained at Qenneshre like his brother.

815 One should make mention here of the monastery of Qarqapta and others like it, from which the 'Syriac Masora,' are said to have emerged. The biblical, patristic and other texts from which these collections of lists of words were drawn and created to use as a study and reading aid also correspond to Bar Hebraeus' syllabus. On the Syriac Massora and the texts covered in it, see most conveniently Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 259-260. But importantly, see now J. A. Loopstra, 'Patristic Selections In the "Masoretic" Handbooks of the Qarqaptā Tradition,' (PhD, diss., Catholic University of America, 2009). On pp. 340-342, Loopstra discusses the role of Jacob of Edessa in shaping the Syriac 'Masoretic' tradition.

If this is the case, what conclusions can we draw? The testimony of the canons of Jacob and the other bits and pieces I have tried to marshal here suggest that the priest or monk who learned the Psalms and the lectionary or the Scriptures from his village teacher or at a local monastery and then stopped his study was not necessarily sufficiently equipped to defend Miaphysite orthodoxy against the slings and arrows of potential rivals. Nor could such a person always be trusted to maintain the integrity of the boundaries which were supposed to exist between different Christian confessions. The leaders of the Miaphysite movement were none too happy about the chaotic confessional situation on the ground in the seventh and early eighth centuries.

At least part of the answer to this messy state of affairs was an institutional one. Just as today some students go on to pursue studies beyond the secondary level, some young men pursued studies beyond the level of the local village or monastic school. It was at places like Qenneshre and certain other high-powered Miaphysite monasteries like Mar Mattai, Mar Zakai and Beth Malka/Eusebona[816] that the intellectual underpinnings of the Syriac-speaking Miaphysite movement in the seventh century were created and maintained. Miaphysite identity radiated most strongly from these centers and from their graduates. The further one traveled from them, the more likely one was to find confessional confusion, mixing and chaos. It was at intellectual centers like Qenneshre that a graduate school syllabus of study crystallized. It was here where the church leadership was trained. The village priest may not have been able to answer the aporetic questions of the confessional rival in a world also characterized by low-

[816] On Mar Mattai and Mar Zakai as examples of 'Greco-Syriac' monasteries, see J. Watt, 'Al-Fārābī and the History of the Syriac *Organon*,' in Kiraz, ed., *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone*, pp. 759-761. For Beth Malka/Eusebona, see Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, p. 10, n.1 and pp. 32-33.

level theological skirmishing, but he could write a letter to somebody who had been trained at a spiritual Sandhurst like Qenneshre, and he could ask that person for help. This is precisely what we see happening in the letters of George of the Arabs and also in the letters of Jacob of Edessa.

If this picture is in any way a persuasive one, we can say that the translation and retranslation of texts was being driven by the needs of a syllabus of education which equipped spiritual and intellectual core of the Miaphysite movement, men who were operating in an environment of unstable and insecure identities and confessional 'brand' competition.[817] In such an environment, there was a strong need to marginally differentiate themselves[818] from rivals and to assert and draw boundaries between their communities and others.

The continued existence of the Miaphysite church depended on its ability to reproduce a class of leaders who were committed to the doctrinal positions of the Miaphysite movement and who could ably defend those positions against the attacks of rivals.

Of the large number of Christian writers who preceded them, members of the Miaphysite movement—like members of the Nestorian movement and Chalcedonian movement—selected certain authors as spiritual and doctrinal exemplars whose works were to be studied and whose views were to be imitated and taught and transmitted to

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[817] I am grateful to Larry Stratton for the idea of using the notion of 'brand competition' to understand church rivalries.

[818] I use the phrase 'marginal differentiation' here in the modern advertising sense: how does Proctor and Gamble differentiate the different kinds of toothpaste it sells when all the toothpastes have the same basic purpose? Alternately, given that there is great similarity and much overlap between various Christian groups, how does one group distinguish itself from another? See the Sicilian proverb quoted as an epigram at the beginning of Anton Blok's article, 'The Narcissism of Minor Differences,' pp. 115-135, in *idem*., *Honour and Violence* (Malden, Mass., 2001). 'Nella stessa faccia, l'occhio destro odiava il sinistro. (In the same face, the right eye hated the left.)' (quote on p. 115).

subsequent generations. There was of course overlap between the writers deemed 'Fathers' by Miaphysites, Nestorians and Chalcedonians, but there was also important difference. Rabban Bar 'Īdta was reading Nestorios and Theodore of Mopsuestia in his cell but Jacob of Edessa lamented he did not have his Philoxenos and Severos with him; both men, however, read Basil. In some important sense then, Miaphysite identity, like Nestorian identity, and Chalcedonian identity, was a function of what was being read and taught to and by the leaders of the movement in its intellectual centers. In some sense, therefore, then as now, you are what you read.

Chapter 8: Continuities: Personal and Institutional

One of the primary aims of this dissertation has been to make a strong argument for continuity between what we conceptualize as the Late Antique/Late Roman/Byzantine period in the Middle East and what is commonly thought of as the 'Islamic' period, dating from the Arab conquests of the seventh century. Qenneshre and the people who studied there provide us with a bridge which spans the Late Antique and 'Islamic' eras and show us one of the unbroken paths Antique elite culture and learning traveled on its journey from Alexandria, Constantinople and Athens to medieval Baghdad. Scholars looking to explain the transmission of Greek wisdom into an Arabic-language context need only look at the living ecclesiastical traditions from which the translators who did the transmitting came; al-Fārābī's account of Arabic philosophy being transmitted to Baghdad via Alexandria and then Antioch is both fanciful and misleading.[819] Before moving to the question of how Muslims and Islam fit into my picture of the early medieval Middle East, I would like to further explore the question of continuity in this chapter.

Severos' Sebokht's association with Qenneshre and Athanasios II of Balad gives us an attested student-teacher line which runs: Severos Sebokht > Athanasios of Balad > George of the Arabs. Jacob of Edessa, who had been elevated to bishop by Athanasios[820] may very well have been Athanasios' student as well; Jacob certainly belonged to the same milieu and Miaphysite intellectual elite as Severos, Athanasios and George. It was

[819] For the account, see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʻUyūn al-anbāʼ*, pp. 604-605. ET available in F. Rosenthal, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (London and New York, 1975), pp. 50-51. On the Alexandria-to-Baghdad legend, see D. Gutas, 'The "Alexandria to Baghdad" Complex of Narratives. A Contribution to the Study of Philosophical and Medical Historiography among the Arabs,' *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 10 (1999), pp. 155-193 (pp. 187-188 on the part of the story dealing with the geographic movement instruction). See also, J.W. Watt, 'Al-Fārābī and the History of the Syriac *Organon*,' pp. 751-752.

[820] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, vol. 1, col. 289.

George who finished Jacob's *Hexaemeron* after he died before completing it;[821] both George and Jacob corresponded with John, the Stylite of Litarb;[822] moreover, as I mentioned in the previous chapter, John of Litarb would write to George asking for help in understanding difficult passages in Jacob's letters, and John himself grouped George and Jacob together as authorities along with Severos Sebokht. In John's one extant letter, written to an Arab priest named Daniel about the prophesy of Genesis 49:10, his stated aim was not to write out anything new, but only to report what previous authorities have written on the question;[823] it is noteworthy, therefore, that he only cites three texts from the seventh and eighth centuries: a *memra* by Severos Sebokht and letters written by Jacob of Edessa and George of the Arabs.[824] In other words, by John's time in the first part of the eighth century, Severos, Jacob and George were already being grouped together and associated with one another. Given John of Litarb's connection to George and Jacob, we could re-write the student-teacher line as follows: Severos Sebokht > Athanasios II of Balad > George of the Arabs (and Jacob of Edessa?) > John of Litarb.

The line from Severos Sebokht (d. 666-667) to Athanasios of Balad (d. 686), George of the Arabs (d. 724) and then to John of Litarb (d. 738) provides more than one

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[821] See I.-B. Chabot, ed., *Iacobi Edesseni Hexaemeron* (CSCO 92: SS 44) (Paris, 1928), p. 347.

[822] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 258.

[823] BL Add. 12,154, fol. 291a: ...ܗܕܐ ܡܒܪܪܐ ܗܝ ܓܠܝܐܝܬ ܘܡܦܫܩܐ ܠܡܟܬܒܢ̈ܐ ܕܙܒܢ̈ܐ ܘܐܦ ܠܡܠܦܢ̈ܐ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ. ܘܠܐ ܣܢܝܩܐ ܠܒܘܪܪܐ ܘܦܘܫܩܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܕܡܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܐܟܘܬܢ. ܐܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܒܥܬ ܐܚܘܬܟ ܕܐܥܒܕ ܠܗ̇. ܗܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܥܗܕܢܘܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܒܦܣܝܩܬܐ ܐܟܬܘܒ ܠܗ̇ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܪܫܡܘ ܘܟܬܒܘ ܒܡܘܪܟܐ. ܟܕ ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܢ ܕܝܠܝ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܐܘ ܟܬܒ ܐܢܐ+ '...this is clearly explained and interpreted by chroniclers and even by holy teachers and is not in need of another explanation and interpretation from a person like us. Since, however, your brotherhood has asked that I make [an explanation] for it, look now, I will set down in brief for it—and only as a reminder of sorts—these things which some of these people inscribed and wrote out at length, neither stating or writing anything of my own.' Severos Sebokht makes a similar claim in his letter to Yonan the Periodeute, stating that he will not state anything from himself, but will only speak from those things which had been previously stated by the ancients; see Cambridge Add. 2812, fol. 109b.

[824] For the quotations from these three, see BL Add. 12,154, fols. 292a-293b.

hundred years of continuity in intellectual inquiry and study in the Near East. Severos must have been born before the Arab conquests and may perhaps have even been born before the outbreak of the Byzantine-Persian wars of the early seventh century. The scanty biographical information we possess about John of Litarb does not allow us to know whether he studied at Qenneshre, but Severos Sebokht, Athanasios II, Jacob and George were all associated with the place. The generation of scholars associated with Qenneshre before Severos included Paul of Edessa, who revised the Syriac translation of the *Homilies* of Gregory on Cyprus ca. 624. It also included the important Patriarch Athanasios Gamolo (sed. 594/5-631).

It is tempting to speculate that Severos knew both these men and perhaps studied with them: we know, for instance, that by ca. 660, Severos was using Paul of Edessa's revised translation of the *Homilies*, providing us with perhaps its earliest witnesses,[825] and it has been argued that Athanasios I Gamolo was the patron who commissioned and funded Paul of Edessa's re-translation of the *Homilies*.[826]

Athanasios I was the patron who commissioned Paul of Tella's translation of the Syro-Hexapla[827] and was perhaps behind the ultra-literal New Testament translation of his synkellos Thomas of Harkel as well.[828] Highly educated,[829] he hailed from a wealthy

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[825] See Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, p. 29.

[826] See A. Schmidt, 'The Literary Tradition of Gregory of Nazianzus in Syriac Literature and its Historical Context,' *The Harp* 11-12 (1998-1999), pp. 132-134.

[827] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 186.

[828] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 188 and Cf. Schmidt, 'The Literary Tradition of Gregory of Nazianzus in Syriac Literature and its Historical Context,' p. 133. For Thomas of Harqel as Athansios' synkellos, J. Gwynn's article 'Thomas Harklensis,' in *A Dictionary of Christian Biography, Literature, Sects and Doctrines; during the First Eight Centuries*, vol. 4 (London, 1887), pp. 1014-1021 (on p. 1015 Gwynn makes the argument for identifying Thomas the synkellos with Thomas of Harqel).

[829] The *Life* of Athanasios contained in Michael the Syrian's *Chronicle* notes that when a group of bishops met Athanasios, who was driving a camel, and 'tasted his knowledge,' and learned that he was from a great (or 'the great') monastery (i.e., Qenneshre), they forcefully took him back to the synod of bishops that had gathered to elect a new Patriarch and ordained him. See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 389 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 376 (FT). The *History of the Patriarchs of Alexandria* refers to him as 'a man

and elite family in Samosata.[830] Athanasios' father had been friends with Severos of Antioch and his grandfather had been close friends with the grandfather of Severos.[831] If we assume Athanasios I had a connection to Severos Sebokht via Qenneshre,[832] we have an unbroken and continuous line of Miaphysite scholars and intellectuals stretching from the high point of the Miaphysite movement in the time of the Emperor Anastasios into the late Umayyad period.

Even if the existence of such a remarkable person-to-person chain stretching for over two hundred years is not plausible, we have in the monastery of Qenneshre, itself founded about the year 530,[833] an institutional continuity stretching from the

who was a monk and a priest and a scholar...exceedingly wise and pure in heart.' (translation B. Evetts in *idem*., trans. and ed., *History of the Patriarchs of the Coptic Church of Alexandria I: Saint Mark to Theonas (300)*, *Patrologia Orientalis* 1 (Paris, 1907), p. 480). Athanasios engaged in theological negotiations with the Emperor Herakleios (See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, pp. 403-404, 404-408, 409-410 (Syriac) = vol. 2, pp. 401-403, 405-408, 412 (FT)) and also was involved in the negotiations with Anastasios of Alexandria which ended the Tritheist schism between the Miaphysite churches of Egypt and Syria (See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, pp. 391-392, 401 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 381, 403 (FT))

[830] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 388 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 375: ܗܢܐ ܓܢܣܗ ܡܢ ܫܡܝܫܛ ܗܘܐ. ܘܟܕ ܡܝܬ ܐܒܘܗܝ. ܐܫܬܒܩ ܗܘ ܘܣܘܝܪܐ ܐܚܘܗܝ، ܝܬܡܐ [ܠܝܬܡܘܬܐ]. ܥܠ ܝܘܚܢܐ ܐܡܗܘܢ ܕܢܟܦܐ. ܗܝ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܗܘܬ ܢܟܦܬܐ ܘܨܝܡܬܐ ܘܪܚܡܬ ܡܣܟܢܐ. ܒܗ ܕܝܢ ܠܥܘܬܪܐ ܕܫܒܩ ܒܥܠܗ ܠܡܣܟܢܐ ܦܠܓܬܗ ܘܠܥܕܬܐ ܘܪܒܝܬ ܠܒܢܝܗ ܒܢܟܦܘܬܐ ܙܗܝܪܬܐ. 'As for this one, his family was from Samosata. When his father died, he and his brother Severos were left orphans, in [the care] of their mother Joanna who was chaste and a faster and a lover of the poor. Therefore, she distributed the wealth her husband left her to the poor and to churches and raised her sons in modesty.'

[831] Athanasios is regarded as the author of a text known as the *Conflict of Severos*, about the life of Severos of Antioch; see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 186. The text survives in Ethiopic and in fragmentary form in Coptic. The author of the *Conflict of Severos* gives the following autobiographical information about the connection between his family and the famous Patriarch of Antioch: 'And my father after the flesh was with him and served him well, for he was an elder, and my grandfather besides was of the men of his country; he was moreover a blessed father and an elder, and his name, like mine, was Athanasius. And he loved the old man Severus, the bishop in his city, who was the grandfather of Severus the patriarch. And the bishop belonged to the council of Ephesus... And this great father Severus, who was grandfather of the patriarch Severus, knew my grandfather, and he used to recline with him at the table continually, and to talk with him, for they loved each other exceedingly.' Translation E.J. Goodspeed in E.J. Goodspeed and W.E. Crum., ed. and trans., *The Conflict of Severus, Patriarch of Antioch by Athansius* (Patroligia Orientalis 4) (Paris, 1908), p. 592; also see p. 726 for Athanasios Gamolo as the author of the *Conflict*.

[832] Though NB., Athanasios resided in the monastery of Mar Zakai in Kallinikos as Patriarch; see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 185.

[833] F. Nau demonstrated that Qenneshre must have been founded between 528 and 531. See *idem*., 'Histoire de Jean bar Aphtonia,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 7 (1902), pp. 98-99; also cf. *idem*.,

heart of the age of Justinian into the ʻAbbasid period. The political chaos which followed the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in 193 AH/AD 809 led to violence which saw the churches of Jerusalem sacked, as well as the desolation of great monasteries and *lavras* in Palestine, such as St Saba and St Euthymios.[834] Further north, in Syria, Qenneshre was sacked and torched around AD 811.[835] At the time of its destruction, Qenneshre had been a continuously functioning center of Miaphysite intellectual activity for some 280 years,[836] a period which straddled the alleged Dark Ages, the Arab conquests, the rise

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ʻAppendice: Fragments sure le monastère de Qenneshre,ʼ in *Actes du XIV congrès international des orientalistes*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1907), p. 76.

[834] The *lavras* of St Chariton and St Kyriakos were destroyed as well as the *koinobia* of St Euthymios and St Theodosios. See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813*, (Oxford, 1997), p. 665.

[835] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, pp. 490-491 (Syriac) = vol. 3, p. 23. ܒܗܢܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܗ̇ܘܐ ܚܘܪܒܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܢܫܪܝܢ ܗܟܢܐܝܬ ܕܫܡܗ ܪܒܝܥ ܢܨܪܝܐ ܡܢ ܓܫܪܐ ܕܥܠ ܦܪܬ. ܟܕ ܩܒܥ ܒܢܕܐ. ܐܬܟܢܫܘ. ܠܗ ܥܡܗ. ܘܐܬܐ ܠܕܝܪܐ ܕܩܢܫܪܝܢ. ܘܟܕ ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܐܢܫ ܕܢܬܠ ܠܗ ܡܕܡ ܠܦܘܪܩܢܗ ܫܠܛ ܚܒܪܘܗܝ، ܘܒܙܘܗ̇ ܘܐܘܩܕܘܗ̇ ܒܢܘܪܐ. ܘܠܗܝܟܠܗ̇ ܡܫܒܚܐ ܕܠܝܬ ܐܟܘܬܗ ܗܘܐ ܘܐܘܩܕܘ ܐܦ ܠܗܝܟܠܐ ܕܬܐܘܡܐ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܠܥܠ ܒܫܩܝܦܐ. ܘܐܦ ܠܗ ܠܚܣܢܐ. ܘܒܬܪܟܢ ܐܬܟܢܫܘ ܓܘܒܝܐ ܕܩܪܝܒܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܫܩܠܘ ܩܝܣܐ ܘܬܪ̈ܥܐ ܘܐܚܪܒܘܗ̇ ܠܕܝܪܐ ܠܓܡܪܗ̇. ܘܗܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܕܝܪܐ ܕܐܘܩܕ ܒܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܛܝܝ̈ܐ. ʻIn this time, the destruction of the monastery of Qenneshre took place in the following way. [There was] a person by the name of Rabīʻa, a follower of Naṣr, from Gishra which is on the Euphrates; when he had fixed his standard, his associates were gathered with him and he came to the monastery of Qenneshre. And when there was nobody who gave him anything for its deliverance, he authorized his companions and they plundered it and burned it with fire, even its glorious chapel which had no equal. They also burned the chapel of Thomas the Apostle which was on the rocks above and even the fortified area. Afterwards, the people of Gubba, who were nearby, gathered and took [its] wood and doors and completely destroyed the monastery. This was the first monastery he burned in the reign of the Arabs.ʼ The text literally reads ʻRabīʻa Naṣrāyā,ʼ or ʻRabīʻa the Naṣrite.ʼ The Naṣr here referred to is Naṣr b. Shabath al-ʻUqaylī, a leader who emerged in the chaos and civil war which followed the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in AD 809 and who first shows up in Arabic sources in 811-812, as the leader of gangs of rebels. See C.E. Bosworth's article about him, *s.n.* in EI^2. I have rendered the Syriac ʻGūbāyēʼ as ʻthe people of Gubba,ʼ and understand this to refer to a nearby place. There is a village 10 KM SE of the location of Qenneshre called today Jubb al-Faraj which I suspect may be the origin of these Gūbāyē.

[836] Syriac chronicles report an incident of spectacular demon possession at Qenneshre in the middle part of the seventh century, either in the year AG 960 (AD 649) or during the episcopate of Daniel of Edessa (sed. 665-684); for the various accounts with ET, see A. Palmer, S.P. Brock and R. Hoyland, *The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), pp. 171-173. F. Nau published a fragmentary account of a demon possession at Qenneshre which seems to deal with the same events described in the chronicles (see F. Nau, ʻAppendice: Fragments sure le monastère de Qenneshre,ʼ in *Actes du XIV congrès international des orientalistes*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1907), pp. 76-135). Nau argued, p. 77, that the demons might actually be understood as enemies of the Miaphysites and that the story suggested that Qenneshre had been occupied for a time by Chalcedonians. If this is the case, then there was some period in the middle part of the seventh century where there was a discontinuity in the continuous Miaphysite scholarship and intellectual activity at the monastery.

and fall of the Umayyads, and the ‘Abbasid revolution. After its destruction, Qenneshre’s monks were dispersed.[837] Although it would be rebuilt around 820,[838] the last great figure to be associated with the monastery, the polymath and patriarch Dionysios of Tell Maḥre (d. 845), was trained there before its tragic burning and plunder.[839]

Qenneshre would never return to its former glory of the sixth, seventh and early eighth centuries. Nevertheless, bishops would still come from there as late as the tenth century[840] and Arabic Muslim sources indicate that it was an impressive place and a destination for visitors into the time of the Hamdanid Sayf al-Dawla in the early tenth century.[841] Recent archaeological work suggests that the monastic site was inhabited until the first half of the thirteenth century.[842]

Qenneshre = A Dead End?

I have promised a bridge from Alexandria to Baghdad, but some might argue that mine is actually a bridge to nowhere: I have focused here on Miaphysite scholars and my line of continuity stops in the first half of the eighth century. Ḥunayn and his fellow translators lived in the ninth century and the majority of them were Nestorians. Qenneshre was not located in or near Baghdad. I have concentrated on the wrong church and furthermore, my bridge of continuity does not quite make it to the far side of the cultural canyon, over the abyss of the Dark Ages.

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[837] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, col. 349.

[838] See Michael the Syrian, vol. 3 (French) p. 49 = vol. 4 (Syriac), p. 507. See also Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, cols. 353, 355.

[839] See Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, col. 347 for Dionysios’ connection to Qenneshre.

[840] See Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien,* vol. 3, p. 462, for a reference to Aaron of Gisra, the last known bishop consecrated from Qenneshre.

[841] See Ibn al-‘Adīm, *Bughyat al-ṭalab fī ta’rīkh Ḥalab* vol. 10 (Beirut, n.d.), p. 4489.

[842] According to Yousef al-Dabte, the archaeologist who excavated Qenneshre, classification and analysis of the ceramics found at the site suggest that ‘without any doubt’ the monastery was inhabited until the first half of the 13th century. Personal communication, June 30, 2009.

Such an objection can only gain traction if we are to assume that members of different churches had no interaction and lived lives sealed off from one another. But this of course, was not the case at all. One of the central arguments of the previous several chapters was that a tightly compartmentalized view of the Christian religious communities of the Middle East in the Late Antique and early medieval period is neither helpful nor useful nor, for that matter, the best way to make sense of the evidence we possess. The appearance of Jacob of Edessa and Athanasios of Balad in the marginalia of the Paris *Organon* shows that their work was still being read well into the 'Islamic' Middle Ages. More importantly, we know that Nestorians at an earlier period were aware of and reading Miaphysite scholarship produced by people from Qenneshre in the seventh century.

Earlier, I made the argument that the use of the peculiar Syriac calque *l-meḥdā* was used perhaps exclusively by scholars who had spent time at Qenneshre. This was not entirely accurate. I am aware of only one example of the use of this distinctively Hellenizing letter salutation in by a non-Miaphysite, non-Qenneshre-trained individual: the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy I. Timothy's unpublished *Letter 40*, written in the year 780-781, contains the distinctive expression in its opening lines.[843] This unique usage suggests that Timothy had been reading and was imitating earlier Miaphysite scholarship, something which should come as no surprise: as we saw in portions of his

[843] See Mingana 587, fol. 280a: ܠܪܒܢ ܡܪܝ ܣܪܓܝܣ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܐ. ܛܝܡܬܐܘܣ ܒܡܪܢ ܠܡܚܕܐ܀ 'To Rabban Mar Sergios, priest and teacher. [From] Timothy: Rejoice in the Lord!' For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73. A letter by the late-eighth century West Syrian David bar Paulos as published by I.E. Rahmani in *Studia Syriaca seu collection documentorum hactenus ineditorum ex codicibus syriacis*, vol. 1, (Charfeh, 1904), p. ܡܗ begins: ܠܪܚܡ ܘܡܝܬܪܐ ܕܪ̈ܝܫܐ ܕܟܘܪܝܢ. ܡܣܟܢܐ. ܡܪܝ ܘܣܝܢ. ܕܘܝܕ ܒܪܬܪܐ ܥܠܡ ܘܠܡܚܙܐ܀ Rahmani, p. translates this last part, 'salutem cum desiderio eundem adspiciendi,' though it might be easier to suppose that the ܠܡܚܙܐ of Rahmani's manuscript should be read as a ܠܡܚܕܐ and that the learned David, whose writings included philosophical and grammatical topics, was using the calque characteristic of Qenneshre's philhellenes.

letters cited in Chapter 1, Timothy was an avid consumer of translations produced by Miaphysite philhellenes and actively sought previous translations to help him in his own translational endeavors.

The eagerness Timothy showed in the letters I cited in Chapter 1 to obtain Miaphysite scholarship were not isolated incidents in his life. Time and again, we find him trying to get his hands on books, Christian and pagan, regardless of their confessional provenance. 'Take care to copy out [Pseudo-] Dionysios,' Timothy writes to the priest Sergios in his *Letter 16*, written sometime around AD 783-785, '—the version of Athanasios [of Balad] or Phokas.' Athanasios and Phokas are two names we have encountered already, and both belonged to the rival Miaphysite church. Timothy was also aware of the potential manuscript riches which were to be found in Miaphysite monasteries. Mar Mattai, in particular, the seat of the bishop of Nineveh/Mosul and the leading Miaphysite monastery in northern Iraq, was the object of intense interest on Timothy's part.[844] 'Search out books of our Fathers,' he continued, 'at [the monastery] of Mar Mattai, and let me know about them. Look for books which are not available, as much as you are able, and provide me with information about them.'[845] Writing a few years later, some time between 785 and 789, Timothy was still trying to get hold of books from Mar Mattai. 'Search at [the monastery of] Mattai for the treatise that Athanasios wrote in defense of his flight,' he would tell Sergios in his *Letter 39*, 'and also for the treatise of the holy Gregory of Nyssa on the burial of Makrina his sister.

[844] On Mar Mattai, see E. Balicka-Witakowski, S.P. Brock, D.G.K. Taylor and W. Witakowski, *The Heirs of the Ancient Aramaic Heritage*, vol. 2 of The *Hidden Pearl: The Syrian Orthodox Church and its Ancient Aramaic Heritage* (Rome, 2001), pp. 159-160 and Barsoum, *al-Lu'-lu al-manthūr*, p. 514.

[845] See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), p. 120: ܘܐܬܚܦܛ ܠܡܟܬܒ ܕܝܘܢܘܣܝܘܣ ܡܫܘܠܡܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܐܘ ܕܦܘܩܐ. ... ܘܒܥܝ ܥܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܒܗܝܢ ܒܒܝܬ ܡܪܝ ܡܬܝ. ܘܐܘܕܥܝܢܝ ܡܛܠܬܗܘܢ. ܘܒܥܝ ܥܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܒܡܐ ܕܡܨܐ ܐܢܬ. ܘܐܘܕܥܝܢܝ ܒܗܘܢ. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73.

Then, look for the book written by Eustathios the Great against the Arians—it is six or seven sections, I don't know which. Be diligent in tracking down these books!'[846]

Timothy was interested in more than just the Miaphysite Monastery of Mar Mattai and its books: he was concerned to comb the collections of Nestorian monasteries as well. Writing to Sergios in 794-795, Timothy was interested in the letters of John Chrysostom to Olympiodoros. 'I once wrote to your chastity,' he begins his *Letter 49*,

> about the letters of the holy Mar John which are to the Christ-loving Olympiodoros, making known to your kindness that three letters were known to us that he wrote to him (?): the three of them were after his first captivity—I think. We have the second and third, but we do not have the first. I remember that we were once in the district of Marga. At that time, we were being instructed at the feet of that Christ-clad man—I mean, at the knees of Rabban Mar Abraham. A book came to Rabban from the monastery of Cyprian and these letters of Mar John were in it, along with other things, and Rabban copied them out. See therefore if they are among those books. Set down their incipits: perhaps that first [letter] is there. If you have these [latter] two, examine them [to see] whether the other is there.[847]

[846] See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), p. 279: ܒܥܝ ܒܥܬ ܬܘܒ، ܥܠ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܒܘܣܝܐ ܕܒܪܝ ܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ ܥܠ ܒܘܪܣܝܐ ܕܝܠܗ: ܘܥܠ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܦܪܝܫܐ ܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܕܢܘܣܐ ܕܥܠ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܕܡܪܢܝܬܐ ܣܓܝܐ. ܒܥܝ ܕܝܢ ܘܥܠ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܪܒܐ ܐܘܣܛܬܝܘܣ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܪܝܢܐ. ܕܗܘܝܐ ܫܬܐ ܐܘ ܫܒܥܐ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܝܢ ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܐ. ܚܦܛ ܕܝܢ ܕܬܬܒܥܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܟܬܒ̈ܐ܀ LT in *idem.*, trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 194. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 74.

[847] Mingana Syriac 587, fols. 346b-347a: ܟܬܒܬ ܠܢܟܦܘܬܟ ܒܙܒܢ ܚܕ ܥܠ ܐ̈ܓܪܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܘܬ ܪܚܡ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܐܘܠܘܡܦܝܕܘܪܘܣ. ܘܡܘܕܥ ܐܢܐ ܠܛܝܒܘܬܟ. ܕܬܠܬ ܐ̈ܓܪܢ ܐܬܝܕܥ ܕܟܬܒ ܠܗ ܠܘܬ ܗܢܐ. ܘܬܠܬܝܗܝܢ ܒܬܪ ܫܒܝܬܐ ܗܝ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܝ ܡܣܬܒܪܐ. ܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܕܬܪܬܝܢ ܘܕܬܠܬ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܠܢ. ܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܠܝܬܝܗ̇ ܠܢ. ܘܡܕܟܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܟܕ ܒܙܒܢ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܕܡܪܓܐ ܐܝܬܝܢ܆ ܘܗܝܕܝܢ ܒܝ ܪ̈ܓܠܘܗܝ ܕܓܒܪܐ ܗܘ ܠܒܝܫ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܡܬܪܕܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ: ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܝܢ ܒܘܪܟܘܗܝ ܕܪܒܢ ܡܪܝ ܐܒܪܗܡ. ܐܬܐ ܠܘܬ ܪܒܢ ܟܬܒܐ ܡܢ ܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܩܘܦܪܝܢܐ. ܘܐܝܬ ܗܘܝ ܒܗ ܐ̈ܓܪܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ. ܕܡܪܝ ܘܐܝܟ ܥܡ ܫܪ̈ܟܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ܆ ܘܟܬܒ ܐܢܝܢ ܪܒܢ. ܚܙܝ ܗܟܝܠ ܐܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ ܒܟܬܒ̈ܐ ܗܢܘܢ. ܘܪܫܘܡ ܠܝ ܪ̈ܫܝܗܝܢ. ܕܠܡܐ ܐܝܬ ܬܡܢ ܗܝ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ. ܘܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܬܪܬܝܢ܆ ܒܨܝܢ ܡܫܟܚ ܐܢܬ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܗܝ ܐܚܪܬܐ. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 74. For the more on the (East Syrian) monastery of Cyprian, see J.M. Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne: contribution a l'étude de l'histoire et de la géographie ecclésiastiques et monastiques du nord de l'Iraq*, vol. 1, (Beirut, 1965), pp. 296-300. In *Letter 20* (written sometime 783-785), Timothy writes to Sergios about texts of John Chrysostom and Theodore the Great and recalls seeing texts copied out by Rabban Mar Abraham in Marga. For the text, see O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 130-131. LT in *idem.*, trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 87. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73 and also cf. *ibid.*, p. 25.

Writing later, some time between 799 and 804, Timothy would still be on the lookout for manuscripts. In *Letter 54*, his object was now the writings of Narsai. 'I requested of you,' he tells Sergios, now the Metropolitan of Elam,

> when you went to Elam and I also sent you a record [ὑπομνηστικόν] of the homilies of Rabban Mar Narsai which we possess so that you could look for his homilies and write out for us their titles and two stanzas from the beginning of each homily. But you promised us and did not complete [the task]: not on account of negligence—your reverence is far from [any] blame—but rather on account of obstacles and ill fortune. Give order, my master, and write for us the incipits of the homilies of the treasury which is in Beth Hūzāye: in monasteries and churches and convents, and send to us so that when we have come to you, if there is something which we do not have, we can inform you and you will copy it out for us. And if there is something which you do not have and which you request, we will write it for you, so that both the abundance and the scarcity [of the texts] will be distributed among one another. Go over the homilies in order to know whether they are spurious or authentic.[848]

Translations by the Miaphysite philhellenes of the seventh century were a subject of keen interest for Timothy. 'If possible,' he writes to the priest Sergios in his *Letter 17*, also written sometime around AD 783-785, 'send the exemplar of the heretics, of Gregory [Nazianzen], from which you copied out two parts. For I have the version which you wrote out, two parts, but they have, however, not at all been corrected. If those of the heretics cannot be sent, send me yours.'[849] Over a decade later, in his *Letter*

[848] Mingana Syriac 587, fol. 355a: ܒܥܝܬ ܕܝܢ ܡܢܟܘܢ ܟܕ ܐܙܠܬܘܢ ܠܥܝܠܡ. ܘܐܦ ܫܕܪܬ ܠܟܘܢ ܗܘܦܘܡܢܣܛܝܩܘܢ ܕܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܪܒܢ ܡܪܝ ܢܪܣܝ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܢ: ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܬܒܥܘܢ ܥܠ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܘܗܝ، ܘܬܟܬܒܘܢ ܠܢ ܪ̈ܫܝܗܘܢ ܘܬܪܝܢ ܬܪ̈ܥܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܪܝܫ ܡܐܡܪܐ. ܘܐܫܬܘܕܝܬܘܢ ܠܢ ܘܠܐ ܕܝܢ ܫܡܠܝܬܘܢ. ܠܐ ܡܢ ܡܡܚܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ. ܪܚܝܩܐ ܓܝܪ ܚܣܝܘܬܟܘܢ ܡܢ ܪܫܝܢܐ. ܡܢ ܥܘܩܒܐ ܕܝܢ ܘ ܓܕܫܐ ܣܟܠܝܐ. ܦܩܘܕ ܡܪܝ ܕܝܠܝ ܘܟܬܘܒ ܠܢ ܪ̈ܫܐ ܕܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܓܙܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܒܝܬ ܗܘܙܝܐ ܒܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ ܘܒܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܘܒܥܘܡܪ̈ܐ ܘܫܕܪ ܠܢ. ܕܟܕ ܐܬܝܢ ܠܘܬܟܘܢ: ܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܢ: ܡܘܕܥܝܢ ܠܟܘܢ. ܘܡܟܬܒܝܢ ܐܢܬܘܢ ܠܢ. ܘܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܟܘܢ ܘܡܒܥܝܬܘܢ ܟܬܒܝܢ ܠܟܘܢ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܢܦܠܓ ܒܝܢܬ ܚܕ̈ܕܐ ܠܝܬܝܪܘܬܐ ܘܠܒܨܝܪܘܬܐ. ܘܥܒܪ ܒܗܘܢ ܒܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܬܕܥ ܐܢ ܗܘ ܓܢ̈ܝܒܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܘ ܫܪ̈ܝܪܐ. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 74 and for this letter in general, see *ibid.*, p. 40. I am grateful to Luke Yarbrough and Yossi Witztum for help with the Syriac of this passage.

[849] See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 123-124: ܘܐܢ ܡܨܝܐ ܫܕܪ ܟܬܒܐ ܕܗܪ̈ܛܝܩܐ: ܕܓܪܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܗܘ ܕܟܬܒܬܘܢ ܡܢܗ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܦܠܓ̈ܘܬܐ. ܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܓܝܪ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܟܬܒܬܘܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܦܠܓ̈ܘܬܐ. ܒܪܡ ܠܓܡܪ ܠܐ ܡܬܬܪ̈ܨܢ. ܘܐܢ ܠܐ ܡܨܝܐ ܕܢܫܬܕܪ̈ܢ

22, written to Sergios at some point between 799 and 804, we find Timothy still speaking about the two volumes of Gregory's work in Miaphysite translation. 'We have returned to them,' he writes Sergios, now Metropolitan of Elam, 'the two books of the holy Gregory—the version of Paul [of Edessa] and the revision of Athanasios [of Balad].'[850]

Having gained access to a heretical translation was not enough for Timothy, either. Once he had made his own copy, he was eager to collate and correct it. In his *Letter 18*, written sometime in 783-785, Timothy again brings up with Sergios the issue of the text of Gregory Nazianzen he had been seeking out. After his request made in *Letter 16*, he had received the version of Gregory, but not all of it:

> Now, our brother Rabban Aba has arrived safely to us and the final volume of the holy and God-clad Gregory [Nazianzen], along with seven quires from the first, have been written out and come here undamaged; we thank you, O spiritual brother, for sending them. But look now: although I previously wrote to your chastity that you send the entire tome—quires were not to be sent—but given that they have been sent, we have nevertheless gone over them with our copy and we are sending together [to you] both them and the final volume which you sent. For we have this version—[in] two sections—but the [sections] are not collated and these words which are written in Greek are not present in them.[851]

'If possible,' Timothy writes to Sergios in his *Letter 19*, again, written sometime in 783-785,

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ܗܢܝܢ ܕܓܪ̈ܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ: ܥܕܪ ܠܝ ܕܢܬܠܘܢ LT in *idem.*, trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 82. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73.

850 See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), p. 135: ܐܗܦܟܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܦܢܩܝܬܐ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܓܪ̈ܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ: ܡܦܩܬܐ ܗ̄ܝ ܕܦܘܠܐ: ܬܘܪܨܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܢܣܝܘܣ LT in *idem.*, trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 91. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 75.

851 See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), p. 126: ܗܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܚܘܢ ܐܒܐ ܐܬܦܢܝ ܒܫܠܡ ܠܘܬܢ. ܘܦܢܩܝܬܐ ܕܩܕܝܫܐ ܘܠܒܝܫ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܓܪ̈ܝܓܘܪܝܘܣ ܗ̄ܝ ܐܚܪܝܬܐ: ܥܡ ܟܪ̈ܣܐ ܫܒܥܐ ܕܡܢ ܗ̄ܝ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ܐܬܟܬܒܘ ܘܐܬܝܘ ܕܠܐ ܢܟܝܢ. ܘܡܘܕܝܢ ܠܚܒܘܬܟ ܕܐܚܘܬܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܬܐ ܠܟܪ̈ܣܐ. ܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܟܕ ܠܘܬ ܢܟܦܘܬܟ ܟܬܒܬ ܕܬܫܕܪ ܦܢܩܝܬܐ ܗ̄ܝ ܟܠܗ̇ ܕܠܐ ܟܪ̈ܣܐ. ܒܪ̈ܣܐ ܕܝܢ ܠܐ ܢܫܬܕܪܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܟܕ ܐܫܬܕܪܘ ܡܚܠ ܚܒܪܢܢ ܒܗܘܢ ܥܡ ܦܢܩܝܬܐ ܗ̄ܝ ܕܝܠܢ. ܘܡܫܕܪܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܟܚܕܐ ܘܠܦܢܩܝܬܐ ܐܚܪܝܬܐ ܕܫܕܪܬܘܢ. ܐܝܬ ܠܢ ܓܝܪ ܡܦܩܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܦܠܓ̈ܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܠܐ ܡܚܒܪܢ ܘܠܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒܢ ܝܘܢܐܝܬ. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73.

a list of the books of Mar Zaynā should be sent to us, for perhaps there is among them something which we are unaware of. And you yourself look over his books personally in order to go over them: every subject and every sort. Perhaps you will find in them the two treatises on the poets—for we have one—or maybe you will find among them a translation of Olympiodoros, of the books of logic, or of Stephanos or Sergios or Alexander. Or ecclesiastical books: of Ambrose, or Amphilochios against Apollinaris, or of Eustathios the Great, or of Flavian, or somebody else. You yourself look for Athanasios the Great—the response to the Arians through definite arguments [?], for I have found of it 26 in number, but I have wondered whether perhaps there might be more of it. ... Also seek out for me the dominical letters of Athanasios and that treatise which is an apology for his flight.[852]

The examples of manuscript-thirsty Ḥunayn and Timothy both suggest that scholars were more concerned with getting their hands on texts than they were with the precise theological pedigrees of the circles where those texts were originating from. In Chapter 3, I made reference to the probably fictive story of Jacob of Edessa's conversion to Judaism in an attempt to find new texts he believed Jews to be harboring. Timothy's appetite for Miaphysite translations of texts and his imitation of the style of scholars trained at Qenneshre suffice to show that the monastery's influence did in fact stretch to the cultural epicenter of ʻAbbasid Iraq. The bridge to nowhere is actually a bridge to Baghdad and one of the paths from Alexandria to Baghdad runs through Qenneshre.

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[852] See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 129-130: ܘܐܦ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܢܫܬܕܪ ܒܡܘܕܥܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ̈ܘܗܝ ܕܡܪܝ ܙܝܢܐ. ܟܒܪ ܕܐܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܠܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܒܗ. ܘܐܢܬ ܚܝ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܟܬܒ̈ܘܗܝ ܒܦܪܨܘܦܟ. ܕܬܥܒܪ ܐܢܘܢ ܟܠ ܫܪܒܝܢ ܘܟܠ ܐܣܟܡܝܢ. ܕܠܡܐ ܬܫܟܚ ܒܗܘܢ ܗ̇ܝ ܬܪܬܝܢ ܡܐܡܪ̈ܝܢ ܕܥܠ ܦܘܐܝܛܐ. ܚܕ ܓܝܪ ܐܝܬ ܠܢ. ܐܘ ܕܠܡܐ ܬܫܟܚ ܒܗܘܢ ܦܘܫܩܐ ܕܐܘܠܘܡܦܝܕܘܪܘܣ ܕܥܠ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܠܘܓܝܩܝ. ܐܘ ܕܣܛܦܢܘܣ ܐܘ ܕܣܪܓܝܣ ܐܘ ܕܐܠܟܣܢܕܪܘܣ. ܐܘ ܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܕܐܡܒܪܘܣܝܘܣ. ܐܘ ܕܐܡܦܝܠܘܟܝܘܣ ܕܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܦܘܠܝܢܪܝܘܣ ܐܘ ܕܐܘܣܛܐܬܝܘܣ ܪܒܐ. ܐܘ ܕܦܠܒܝܢܘܣ. ܐܘ ܕܐܚܪܢ ܐܢܫ. ܒܥܝ ܐܢܬ ܠܟܬܒܐ ܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ. ܗܦܘܟܝ ܦܬܓܡܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܐܪܝܘܣ ܒܝܕ ܦܘܢ̈ܝܐ ܡܬܚܡ̈ܢܐ. ܐܫܟܚܬ ܠܗ ܓܝܪ: ܟܘ: ܒܡܢܝܢܐ. ܘܐܬܕܡܪܬ ܕܠܡܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܝܬܝܪܬܐ. ... ܒܥܝ ܠܝ ܘܟܠ ܐ ܐܓܪ̈ܬܐ ܡܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܬܢܐܣܝܘܣ. ܘܟܠ ܗܘ ܡܐܡܪܐ ܕܡܦܩ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܥܠ ܐܪܩܘܬ ܒܪܘܚܝܗ.. LT in *idem*., trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 86. For the date of this letter, see Bidawid, *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 73; cf. also *ibid*., pp. 24-25. NB: BL Add. 18,821, a ninth-century manuscript, perhaps even dating to the life of Timothy I, contains a collection of the poetry and letters of Gregory Nazianzen (including his letter to Amphilochios) as well as part of Olympiodoros' commentary on the *Organon*. See Wright, *Catalogue of Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 2 (London, 1871), pp. 775-776. The text is published with translation and study in G. Furlani, 'Contributi alla Storia della Filosofia Greca in Oriente: Testi Siriaci III. Frammenti di una versione siriaca del comment di Pseudo-Olimpiodoro alle Categorie d'Aristotele,' *Rivsta degli Studi Orientali* 7 (1916-1918), pp. 131-162.

(A Non-Civic) Late Antique Romanitas: It Just Keeps Rolling Along

Throughout this dissertation, I have spoken of an unbroken tradition of antique learning that continued in a Syriac context from Late Antiquity and into the 'Islamic' Middle Ages; I argued that there was a strong continuity between the Late Antique world and that notions of a 'Dark Age' where secular learning ceased and secular genres dried up was a chimera. Strong notions of discontinuity in classical learning only have purchase when one adopts the incomplete perspective of Greek sources, when one, as it were, only reads Krumbacher, Beck and Hunger but does not also take into account Baumstark.

Such a perspective is misleading for several simple reasons: Greek was not the only language spoken in the Middle East in this period, nor was it the only language used to carry out sophisticated intellectual and cultural activities (post-Renaissance educational curricula in the West notwithstanding), nor, then as now, were people in the Middle East universally monolingual. Once the existence of a bilingual (and in the case of some, like George, bishop of the Arabs, perhaps trilingual[853]) elite in the Middle East is recognized, any attempt to write a cultural history of the region which ignores such people and their Syriac writings is instantly problematic and unsatisfactory. In 662, during the 'Dark Ages,' the learned (and bilingual) Severos Sebokht wrote a letter about astronomy from which only a portion now survives in a manuscript in Paris. 'Concerning,' he would tell the recipient, whose name is now lost,

> the matter of people from among the Greeks saying to you, as your brotherhood has written, that it is not at all possible that the Syrians know anything like

[853] One could also mention a figure like Shūbḥālīshū', who according to Thomas of Marga was 'instructed in the Syriac language and learning, and also in the Arabic and Persian tongues.' Trans. E.A.W. Budge in *idem*., ed. and trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Margâ A.D. 840*, vol. 1, (London, 1893), p. 479.

this—I am speaking of reckoning the stars, or solar and lunar eclipses—while supposing that the Greeks alone possess all the knowledge because of the fact that they speak Greek: It made sense that the first to know these things were Babylonian sages, since Babylonians were the first discoverers of this science, not the Greeks, as all the chroniclers of the Greeks bear witness. Then, after the Babylonians, were the Egyptians and then next were the Greeks. Now as regards the Babylonians, they are Syrians—I don't think that anyone will disagree. Therefore, in the case of those who are saying that it is not at all possible that the Syrians should know anything in this manner when the Syrians are the discoverers and first teachers of these things, they are greatly mistaken.[854]

Severos first quotes Ptolemy for support and then cites a passage from Plato's *Timaeus* where Solon reports that an Egyptian priest had told him the Greeks lack ancient tradition and teaching and that in many subjects they had had 'no voice.' 'Therefore,' Severos writes,

> [based on] this testimony, many generations of Greeks did not even know writing, but instead they died 'without voice.' That is, dumb and as if without speech. How is it that some among them [now] exalt themselves as the first discoverers of the science of Mathematics and Astronomy? This is not the case. It is not. For science is not possessed by a language (λέξις)—that is, speech—but rather language is possessed by science.[855]

We have here a universalist claim: science—*īda'tā*—or knowledge, was not the exclusive domain of one language and not the function of a particular linguistic community. Languages were instruments which could express and instantiate *īda'tā*, something

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[854] Paris Syriac 346, fols. 168b-169a: ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܗܝ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܠܡܬܚܡܘ ܐܡܬܝ ܕܐܫܬܘܕܥܬܢ ܒܚܫܒܐ: ܕܠܐ ܠܡ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܦܫܪ ܕܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܢܕܥܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܟܢ: ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܘܫܒܢܐ ܕܟܘܟܒܐ ܘܕܠܩܝܘܬܗ ܕܫܡܫܐ ܘܕܣܗܪܐ: ܟܕ ܣܒܪܝܢ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܟܠܗ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܗܝ ܕܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܡܡܠܠܝܢ ܝܘܢܐܝܬ. ܙܕܩ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܩܕܡܝܬ ܠܡܕܥ ܗܠܝܢ ܟܕ ܚܟܝܡܐ ܒܒܠܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܠܡܕܥ. ܕܡܫܟܚܢܐ ܗܘܘ ܒܒܠܝܐ ܩܕܡܝܬ ܗܘܘ ܡܫܟܚܢܐ [ܡܫܟܚܢܘܬܗ] ܘܠܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܡܟܬܒܢܐ ܕܙܒܢܐ ܕܝܘܢܝܐ ܣܗܕܝܢ. ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܕܝܢ ܒܒܠܝܐ ܐܦ ܡܨܪܝܐ ܘܗܝܕܝܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ. ܕܒܒܠܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܠܐ ܣܒܪ ܕܐܢܫ ܡܬܚܪܐ. ܡܕܝܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܡܪܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܦܫܪ ܕܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܢܕܥܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܟܢ: ܟܕ ܗܢܘܢ ܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܗܘܘ ܡܫܟܚܢܐ ܘܡܠܦܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܗܠܝܢ ܛܥܝܢ ܛܒ.

[855] Paris Syr. 346, fols. 169b-170a: ܡܢ ܣܗܕܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ: ܐܦܠܐ ܗܘ ܣܦܪܐ ܝܕܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܕܪ̈ܐ ܣܓܝܐܐ ܝܘܢܝܐ: ܐܠܐ ܡܝܬ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܕܠܐ ܩܠܐ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܫܬܝܩܐܝܬ ܘܐܝܟ ܠܐ ܡܡܠܠܝܢ. ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܕܡܫܟܚܢܐ ܗܢܘ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ ܡܬܡܛܝܩܝܬܐ ܘܕܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ ܡܬܪܘܪܒܝܢ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ. ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܕܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܕܠܟܣܝܣ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܗܝ ܡܠܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܕܝܕܥܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗ̇ܝ ܕܝܢ ܡܠܬܐ. Syriac text and FT can be found in F. Nau, 'La cosmographie au VIIe siècle chez les Syriens,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 5 (15) 1910, pp. 249-250.

which stood outside of and beyond them. The Greek-speakers who had been boasting to Severos' correspondents about the superiority of Greek cultural achievements were not only historically uniformed; they were also rather provincial in their ignorance of the achievements of people speaking languages other than Greek. Severos had brought up the Babylonians and the Syrians because they were most pertinent to his argument, but he would also make reference to another linguistic community whose achievements were superior to those of both Greeks and Syrians: the Indians.

> I have refrained here from speaking about the science of the Indians—who are not even Syrians—and concerning their insightful discoveries in this discipline of astronomy (which [discoveries] are more skilled than those of the Greeks and those of the Babylonians) and the rational methods of their calculations and of computation which surpass speech. I am speaking of that of nine signs which, if those who think of themselves that they alone have reached the pinnacle of wisdom on account of the fact that they speak Greek were aware of them, they would acknowledge, albeit tardily, that there exist others as well who know something, not just the Greeks, but also people from nations with other languages. I have said these things, not rejecting the wisdom of the Greeks in matters such as these and other things like them—may it never be, for it is not like this at all—I would be erring! Instead, I am seeking to demonstrate that science is universal and that everyone who wants to become diligent [in it, can], whether he be Greek or Barbarian.[856]

Severos would reiterate his universalist claim: Science, *īda'tā*, was something that everybody shared and was not a function of or monopolized by a particular language. It was *d-gawā*, common to everyone. Dialectically, he had used pluralism—the diversity

[856] Paris Syriac 346, fols. 170a-170b: ܫܒܩ ܐܢܐ ܗܫܐ ܠܡܐܡܪ: ܥܠ ܝܕܥܬܐ ܕܗ̈ܢܕܘܝܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܦܠܐ ܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ. ܘܥܠ ܫܟܚܬܐ ܦܪ̈ܝܫܬܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܕܒܝܘܠܦܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܐܣܛܪܘܢܘܡܝܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܬܝܪ ܐܘܡܢܝܢ ܡܢ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܟܝܬ ܘܐܦ ܕܒ̈ܒܠܝܐ: ܘܡܬܘܪ̈ܬܐ ܡܠܝ̈ܠܬܐ ܕܚܘܫ̈ܒܢܝܗܘܢ ܘܡܫܘܚܬܐ ܕܥܒܪܐ ܠܡܠܬܐ: ܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܝ ܕܒܬܫܥ ܐܬܘ̈ܬܐ. ܗܠܝܢ ܕܐܠܘ ܐܢ ܝܕܥܘ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܣܒܪܝܢ ܒܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܕܗܢܘܢ ܒܠܚܘܕܝܗܘܢ ܡܛܘ ܠܪܫܝܬܗ̇ ܕܚܟܡܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܝ ܕܒܠܫܢܐ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܡܡܠܠܝܢ. ܡܬܛܦܣܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܟܒܪ ܐܦ ܐܢ ܡܬܐܚܪܐܝܬ. ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘ ܐܦ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܝܕܥܝܢ ܡܕܡ. ܠܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܢ ܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܝ ܠܫܢܐ❖ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܡܪܬ. ܠܘ ܟܕ ܡܣܠܐ ܐܢܐ ܚܟܡܬܐ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ ܕܒܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ ܘܕܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܕܕܡܝܢ ܠܗܝܢ ܠܐ ܬܗܘܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܟܠܗ ܗܟܢܐ.. ܛܥܐ ܐܢܐ. ܐܠܐ ܟܕ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܚܘܐ ܕܕ ܓܘܐ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܝܕܥܬܐ: ܘܕܟܠ ܡܢ ܕܨܒܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܚܦܝܛܐ: ܐܢ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܗܘ ܘܐܢ ܒܪܒܪܝܐ❖ A FT of much of this passage and a small portion of the Syriac can be found in F. Nau, 'La cosmographie au VIIe siècle chez les Syriens,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 5 (15) 1910, p. 250.

of linguistic communities which had made contributions to knowledge and learning—to deflate the self-congratulatory and solipsistic cultural triumphalism of his correspondent's Greek interlocutors. As a strategy for problematizing limited and narrow perspectives on human cultural achievement, such a move can be quite powerful and effective—and not just in the the seventh century.[857]

In the transition between what contemporary historians conceptualize as the Late Antique and Medieval periods the streams and rivers of antique culture did in fact flow unbroken. This assertion of continuity, of course, needs to be qualified. The streams flowed without interruption, but they narrowed and passed through a smaller

[857] One should also compare Severos' ideas with those used by Gregory Nazianzen in his attacks on Julian the Apostate. See, for example, the following passage from his *First Invective* against Julian: '...but what *is* our part is *this*—that a language is not the property of those that *invented* it, but of those who *share* in the same; neither is there any art of occupation, of whatever sort thou mayest think of, which is not subject to this rule; but just as in a skillfully-composed and musical harmony there is a different sound of each different string, either high or low, yet all belong to one tuner and performer, contributing together to the single beauty of the tune, in the same way, also, the artist and creator, Speech, has appointed a different word for the inventor of each different art or occupation, and has exposed them all alike for public use, coupling together human society by the ties of mutual communication and kindness, and rendering it more gentle. Is speaking Greek thy exclusive right? Pray tell me, are not the letters of the alphabet the invention of the Phoenicians, or, as others say, of the Egyptians, or of those yet wiser than they, the Hebrews—if they believe that the Law was engraved by God upon divinely inscribed tables of stone? Is the Attic language thy right? To calculate sums, and to count, to reckon on the fingers weights and measures, and, before all these, tactics and military rules, to whom to they belong? Do they not to the Euboeans, since Palamedes was an Euboean—that inventor of many things, and thereby becoming an object of jealousy, and having to pay the penalty of his cleverness, condemned to death by those who fought against Troy? What, pray, if Egyptians, Phoenicians, and Hebrews are those whom we employ in common for our education—supposing the natives of Euboea should make a claim (according to the rule thou has laid down) for the things specially belonging to themselves, what in the world shall we do? And what defence shall we offer to them when convicted by laws of our own making? Surely there is no help for it, we must be dispossessed of these things and suffer the fate of the jackdaw, stripped bare, divested of our borrowed plumes, and made objects of ridicule. ...As for sacrificing victims, does that not come from the Assyrians, or perhaps the Cyprians; the observation of the stars from the Chaldeans, the art of land-measuring from the Egyptians? Is not the science of magic a Persian invention? The interpretation of dreams, from whom else dost thou hear it but from the Telmessians? And augury, from whom else than the Phrygians, the first men to study the flying of birds and their various motions?' Trans. C.W. King in *idem*., *Julian the Emperor, containing Gregory Nazianzen's Two Invectives and Libanius' Monodoy with Julian's Extant Theosophical Writings* (London, 1888), pp. 71-72, 73. More generally, see pp. 68-74 (1.102-1.109). I am grateful to Peter Brown for pointing me to Gregory's invectives for this comparison. Compare Gregory's *Invective I* with Ps.-Nonnos' mythological scholia which adds more detail to these claims of precedence in Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, pp. 115-117; Brock (*ibid*., p. 29, n. 7) shows that Severos Sebokht was aware of the *Homilies* of Gregory Nazianzen, which included *Invective I* as well as the *Mythological Scholia* of Nonnos.

number of channels. The intellectual activities I have focused on in this dissertation—Greco-Syriac translation, philosophical study, history writing, and to a lesser extent, astrological and medical study—now took place in monasteries and were carried out by Christian clergy. Polymaths like Severos Sebokht, Jacob of Edessa and George of the Arabs carry the weight of both secular and religious knowledge on their shoulders and represent the same concentration of broad and encyclopedic knowledge in single individuals as Isidore of Seville does in this period in the West.

In the Middle East, traditional Greek learning was no longer the purview of a polis-based, urban elite, though a facile urban-rural binary should be avoided here at all costs. Athanasios Gamolo, the urbane leader of the Syrian Orthodox church in the first three decades of the seventh century was, as I have pointed out, from an elite urban family in Samosata, whereas Jacob of Edessa hailed from a small village in the region of Antioch. Both men were educated at the monastery of Qenneshre, but both men also received educations in urban centers—Jacob in Alexandria and Athanasios most likely in his hometown of Samosata.

The events of Jacob of Edessa's life, in which he moved from small village (ʻAyndābā), to Qenneshre, to Alexandria, to Edessa, to the monasteries of Eusebona and then Tell ʻAda and finally back to Edessa, illustrate nicely the flows that people (and information) might take. Jacob was responsible for reviving the study of Greek at the monastery of Eusebona but was eventually driven away from it by monks there who 'hated Greeks.' Jacob himself died en route from Edessa to the monastery of Tell ʻAda—he was returning to Tell ʻAda to fetch his personal library.[858] The *Life* of Theodota of

[858] See J.-B. Chabot, ed. *Chronique de Michel le syrien, patriarche jacobite de Antioche (1166-1199)* (Paris, 1899-1910), vol. 4 (Syriac) 445-46 ; vol. 2 (FT) 471-472.

Amid in which the protagonist frequently moves from one monastery to the next also suggests that there was a constant traffic of both laypeople and clergy among monastic centers in the seventh century.

These centers of culture were not hermetically sealed from one another: Qenneshre stood out as the most important center for Greco-Syriac study and education in the Syriac-speaking Middle East, but it was not a Lone Ranger and it had more than one Tonto—places like Beth Malke and Tell 'Ada. Qenneshre existed as the primary and most important node in a network of monasteries which, taken collectively, formed the cultural and intellectual skeleton which supported the muscle and tissue of the body of what eventually would be called the Syrian Orthodox church.

What we have emerging in Syria in the sixth through eighth centuries is an example of what Hervé Inglebert has referred to as an 'antiquité post-romaine, une deuxième phase de l'Antiquité,' characterized by a form of Romanitas different from the civic version which so defined the Romanitas of the empire.[859] Imperial persecution of Christological dissidents, combined with the diversity and competition that characterized the Christian communities of greater Syria fueled the development of an alternative, intellectual and cultural elite in the Miaphysite movement, one whose primary basis of operation was in the network of monasteries anchored by Qenneshre.

These monasteries existed alongside the older, urban centers of culture which, to be sure, were not as sterile, even in the 'Dark Ages,' as some might imagine. Jacob did spend part of his life in Edessa and the eighth-century emergence from Edessa of the Maronite Theophilos of Edessa (d. 785), an astrologer to al-Mahdī, translator of

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[859] See H. Inglebert, *Histoire de la civilization romaine* (Paris, 2005), p. 483. I am grateful to Peter Brown for alerting me to Inglebert's notion of a second, post-civic phase of Late Antiquity and Romanitas.

Aristotle and Homer into Syriac, and author of an important chronicle, points to that city's continued status as a center of Antique culture.[860] The precious Melkite Syriac manuscript, BL Oriental 8606, written in Edessa in AD 723, contains Greek words in Syriac unattested anywhere else,[861] and its colophon indicates that the Melkite cathedral there had two different choirs—one Greek and one Syriac.[862] Here we have another indication that Edessa continued to be a vibrant bilingual space and important point for cultural transmission across linguistic lines. Moreover, in the Maronite Theophilos, we have a reminder that it was not just the Miaphysites who were making use of and studying the wisdom of the Greeks.

Nevertheless, monasteries such as Qenneshre were now powerhouses of culture and not just prayer. The demands of training a clergy, manning a church, fending off polemical attacks from rivals led to a situation where Roman culture had become untethered from a civic context, infused with Christianity, and located in monastic centers. And through the gradual accumulation of endowments, often from wealthy urban elites, these monasteries would come to have their own, independent economic bases of survival.[863]

[860] On Theophilos, see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, pp. 341-342.

[861] See C. Moss, 'A Syriac Patristic Manuscript,' *Journal of Theological Studies* 30 (1929), p. 254.

[862] See R.W. Thomson, 'An Eighth-Century Melkite Colophon From Edessa,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 13 (1962) p. 253: ܘ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܪܫ ܩܠܝܐ ܕܝܘ̈ܢܝܐ. ܘܢܝܩܝܢܘܣ ܪܫ ܩܠܝܐ ܕܣܘܪ̈ܝܝܐ. (translation Thomson): '...And John, the head of the choir of the Greeks, and Nicianos, head of the choir of the Syrians...'

[863] See the discussion of the finances of the East Syrian Monastery of Beth 'Ābe by E.A.W. Budge in *idem*., ed. and trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Margâ A.D. 840*, vol. 1, (London, 1893), pp. lxv – lxix. Eventually, taxes from Muslim authorities caused great economic distress to the monastery.

God, Mammon and Monasteries[864]

For some of their revenue, monasteries might rely upon alms and small donations. Monks, it seems, would go about begging for donations on behalf of their convents. In his canons, Jacob of Edessa condemned monks who left their monasteries and married, but put back on the black garb of the *dayroyo* and made the rounds begging for money in the name of monasteries.[865] We also have evidence that at least some priests were trying to charge their parishioners a payment for their sacerdotal activities, but Jacob condemned this practice. 'It is not right for priests,' Jacob wrote in another canon, 'that a wage for their service be sought from the people, as like for the watchmen of a village. For it is not for a wage that priests serve God.'[866] The Qur'ān, for its part, speaks negatively of monks who 'devour the wealth of mankind' and who 'hoard up gold and silver and spend it not in the way of God.'[867]

But not all priests were so unscrupulous. Clergy would also work to earn their daily bread. Thomas of Marga speaks of an old monk named Bakos, living probably in

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[864] Little has been written about the economies of Christian monasteries in the Middle East in the early Middle Ages. See, however, C. Villagomez, *The Fields, Flocks, and Finances of Monks: Economic Life at Nestorian Monasteries, 500-850* (PhD, diss, UCLA, 1998).

[865] Mardin 310, fol. 212v. The same canon occurs in Harvard Syriac 93, fols. 24b-25a. Words in brackets indicate a reading from Harvard Syriac 93 which I have taken over the text in Mardin 310. ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܒܣܪܘ ܩܝܡܗܘܢ ܘܢܦܩܘ ܠܥܠܡܐ ܘܢܣܒܘ ܢܫ̈ܐ: ܕܒܗ ܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܕܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܢܬܗܦܟܘܢ܆ ܐܦ ܒܠܒܘܫܐ ܕܬ̈ܟܢܐ ܐܘܟ̈ܡܐ ܢܬܚܫܚܘܢ܆ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܓܝܪ ܡܢܗܘܢ ܕܟܕ ܗܟܢܐ ܡܢ ܠܒܪ. ܐܦ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܥܘܡܪ̈ܐ ܕܕܒܪ̈ܝܐ [ܕܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ] ܢܦܩܘ ܫܐܠܝܢ. ܟܕ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܢܫ̈ܐ. ܙܕܩ ܡܕܝܢ ܕܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܠܥܠܡܐ ܢܦܩܘ. ܡ̈ܐܢܐ ܚܘ̈ܪܐ ܢܠܒܫܘܢ܆ ܘܠܐ ܢܬܝܩܪܘܢ ܒܐܣܟܡܐ ܗܘ ܕܒܣܪܘ ܒܗ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܙܕܩ. ܐܦܠܐ ܕܠܚܡܐ ܕܒ̈ܢܝܐ ܢܬܪܡܐ ܠܟ̈ܠܒܐ: ܐܝܟ ܡܠܬܐ ܕܦܪܘܩܢ. ܐܠܐ ܢܬܦܠܓܘܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܦܬ̈ܘܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ. 'Monks who have rejected their standing and gone out to the world and taken wives should not return to the habit of monks, nor should they make use of black garments. For many of them, when they have engaged in trickery this way, have also gone out in the name of monasteries of monks, begging, when they have wives. It is right therefore that those who have gone out into the world should wear white garments and not be honored by the habit which they have rejected. For it is not right that the children's bread be tossed to the dogs, according to the statement of Our Savior. Instead, let the crumbs be divided up for them.' (cf. Mark 7:27)

[866] Mardin 310, fol. 208b: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܠܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܬܫܡܫܬܗܘܢ܆ ܡܢ ܥܡܐ ܐ ܐܓܪܐ ܕܢܬܬܒܥܘܢ܆ ܐܝܟ ܕܒܩܘܪܝܬ ܢܛܘܪܐ ܕܩܘܪܝ ܠܩܪܝܬܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܒܐܓܪܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܫܡܫܘܢ ܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ܀

[867] Sura 9:34, translation (with slight alteration) taken from M.M. Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York, n.d.).

the middle of the eighth century, who ‘had near his cell a large olive tree from which he pressed out thirty measures of oil every year, and the tree was therefore precious to him, and he took care of it, and never missed watering it.’[868] In the Arabic *Life* of John of Damascus, John’s master sent him from the monastery of Mar Saba (near Bethlehem) to Damascus to sell ‘our craft’ (‘*amalanā*) and to bring the revenue for the monks to use in their expenditures. John was to sell palm baskets (*al-zanābīl*), a large supply of which the monastery had apparently accumulated at that point.[869] From a question Addai posed to Jacob, we know that priests would also do more than just their responsibilities in church. If an unbaptized infant is dying, Addai wanted to know, and its mother takes him and runs to the mountain or to a field where the priest is, laboring, and there is no river there for baptism and none of the proper vessels—the priest only has water—and time is running out, what should he do?[870] Addai’s question suggests that priests had day jobs, so to speak, in addition to their jobs on Sundays and feast days. Another canon of Jacob suggests that members of the clergy might also be involved in animal husbandry: if a priest helps a mule or a cow give birth, Jacob notes, nothing prevents

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[868] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 426. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 225: ܘܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܒܩܠܝܬܗ ܐܝܠܢܐ ܚܕ ܕܙܝܬܐ ܕܬܠܬܝܢ ܠܝܛܪ̈ܐ ܡܫܚܐ ܒܫܢܬܐ ܥܨܪ ܗܘܐ ܡܢܗ. ܘܗܘ ܚܒܝܒ ܗܘܐ ܘܢܛܪ ܗ̇ ܕܠܡܐ: ܕܠܐ ܫܒܩ ܡܪܦܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܫܩܝܐ ܕܡ̈ܝܐ. The story is related by Isho‘yahb the Long who had been tonsured by Kyriakos of Gebilta (vol. 2, p. 425). Kyriakos, according to Budge, vol. 1, p. cxiii, was likely the abbot of Beth ‘Ābe between 740 and 750 .

[869] See C. Bacha, ed., *Sīrat al-qiddīs Yuḥannā al-Dimashqī* (Harissa, 1912), p. 21.

[870] Mardin 310, fol. 201b: ܐܕܝ. ܐܢ ܢܬܐܠܨ ܥܘܠܐ ܕܢܡܘܬ ܥܕ ܠܐ ܥܡܕ: ܘܫܩܠܬܗ ܐܡܗ ܘܪܗܛܬ ܠܛܘܪܐ ܐܘ ܠܚܩܠܐ ܠܘܬ ܟܗܢܐ ܕܐܝܬܘܗܝ ܒܦܘܠܚܢܐ: ܐܝܟܐ ܕܠܝܬ ܠܐ ܢܗܪܐ: ܘܠܐ ܠܩܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܓܘܪܢܐ. ܐܢ ܡ̈ܝܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܡܫܬܟܚܝܢ ܠܗ ܠܟܗܢܐ ܘܡܩܪܒܐ ܐܢܢܩܐ. ܡܢܐ ܘ̇ܠܐ ܠܗ ܕܢܥܒܕ. ‘Addai: If an unbaptized infant is afflicted to the point of death and his mother takes him and rushes to the mountain or to the field, to the priest who is [there] at work—where there is no river, and no laver (λεκάνη) and no basin (γοῦρνα)—and if there is only water available to the priest and necessity is pressing, what is appropriate for him to do?’

him from serving the Eucharist immediately thereafter.[871] Addai wrote of a deacon during a time of famine who, unable to find any work, not even for payment in bread, was forced to join a band of armed men, presumably brigands, and took up weapons himself. When the time of want ended and there was opportunity for work, he fled his violent occupation, immediately cut his hair, took up his former diaconal garments and returned to religious life.[872]

Clergy and monks might have some sort of trade in order to earn their living. At the time of John of Damascus, the monks of Mar Saba, we have just seen, apparently were engaged in making palm baskets and selling them in markets as far away as Damascus. The *Life* of the Chalcedonian Timothy of Kākhushtā (fl. late eighth and early ninth century) reports that Timothy found a group of monks in the Monastery of Mar Marūn near Shayzar in Syria who were skilled at carpentry. Not having a trade of his own, Timothy learned woodworking from the monks. Part of his motivation for learning from these Monotheletes was evangelistic, but part was economic: Timothy

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[871] See Mardin 310, fols. 209b-210a (cf. n. 736) which refers to a priest who might help a mule or cow give birth and then return to performing his service.

[872] Mardin 310, fols. 215b-216a: ܐܕܝ، ܓܒܪܐ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܟܦܢܐ ܘܕܣܘܢܩܘܬܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܡܕܡ ܕܢܬܬܪܣܐ: ܐܦܠܐ ܐܢܫ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܕܡܩܒܠ ܠܗ ܕܢܦܠܘܚ ܥܡܗ ܐܦ ܒܠܚܡܗ. ܐܙܠ ܕܒܩ ܠܐܢܫܐ ܕܠܒܝܫܝܢ ܙܝܢܐ: ܘܫܩܠ ܐܦ ܗܘ ܙܝܢܐ. ܘܝܬܒ ܥܡܗܘܢ ܟܠܗ ܗܿܝ ܫܢܬܐ. ܘܡܚܕܐ ܕܥܒܪ ܙܒܢܐ ܗܘ ܥܩܐ: ܘܗܘܐ ܙܒܢܐ ܠܦܘܠܚܢܐ. ܐܬܐ ܓܙܪ ܣܥܪܗ ܘܠܒܫ ܐܣܟܡܗ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܘܝܬܒ ܒܫܠܝܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܥܡܗ. ܙܕܩ ܕܢܫܡܫ ܒܬܚܘܡܗ ܩܕܡܝܐ. ܐܘ ܡܬܝܬܝ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܥܠܘܗܝ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܿܝ ܕܡܚܕܐ ܕܐܫܟܚ ܢܝܚܐ: ܡܚܕܐ ܥܪܩ ܡܢ ܒܝܫܬܐ ܘܪܗܛ ܠܘܬ ܢܟܦܘܬܐ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ: ܫܘܕܥ ܕܡܢ ܐܢܢܩܐ ܥܒܕ ܗܘ ܡܐ ܕܥܒܕ. ܘܠܐ ܒܨܒܝܢܐ. ܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܗܝ ܣܗܕܐ ܗܝ، ܕܠܐ ܗܘ، ܕܐܝܟܐ ܕܒ ܢܩܦ ܠܒܝܫܬܐ ܗܦܟ ܒܝܫܬܐ. ܘܡܛܠ ܫܠܝܛ ܗܘ ܠܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܗ: ܕܐܡܬܝ ܕܨܒܐ ܟܕ ܡܒܩܐ ܬܝܒܘܬܗ: ܢܦܫܘܛ ܠܘܬܗ ܡܪܚܡܢܘܬܐ: ܘܢܫܒܘܩ ܠܗ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܗ ܩܕܡܝܬܐ ‘Addai: In the case of a deacon in the time of famine and want: because he had nothing to feed himself and there was no one to receive him to work with him, even for his bread, he went and attached himself to people who were carrying weapons and himself also took up arms and lived with them that entire year. As soon as the difficult time passed and there was an opportunity for work, he came and cut his hair and took his original monastic habit and sat in silence. How should it be with him? Should he serve in his former station, or is there a definite canon about him? Jacob: The fact that as soon as he found relief, he immediately fled from evil and ran to [his] original modesty shows that he did what he did from necessity and not willingly. Therefore, this bears witness that he did not do evil when he followed evil and therefore, it is lawful for his bishop, when he wants, when he examines his repentance, to extend to him mercy and permit him his earlier service.’

hoped that ‘from his labor and the toil of his body, there would come to him enough for his own support as well as for distribution to the poor and to the churches.’[873] Perhaps the situation was not all that different from what the case would be centuries later, when Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728 AH/AD 1328) was asked a question about whether the *jizya* could be lifted on monks who participated in most of the affairs of ordinary people—they received wages, they took up fields of land, raised pigeons and did other economic activities that laypeople engaged in.[874] And even though clergy may have worked, the temptation to abuse one’s power as a priest for economic benefit lurked at the door. Addai wrote of a priest who had composed a writ of anathema and hung it from a tree, forbidding people to eat its fruits. Such a person, Jacob wrote, should be punished and ordered not to do this again.[875]

The major source, however, of monastic revenue was not the rivulets of alms that might come in from the begging activities of monks or even the income from their handicrafts and labor; the broad rivers and streams of money and property flowing into monastic coffers and supporting these institutions were large bequests from the wealthy. We have a number of references to the endowments of monasteries and churches in the sixth through eighth centuries.[876] Their income came from donations

[873] Translation J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala, in J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala edd. and trans., *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 48) (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 544 (Arabic), 545 (ET).

[874] See Aḥmad b. Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ fatāwā*, vol. 28, (Beirut, 1997), p. 659. For this point, cf. T. el-Leithy, *Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293-1524 A.D.* (PhD, diss., Princeton University, 2005), pp. 43-44.

[875] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 146: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܟܬܒ ܚܪܡܐ ܘܬܠܐ ܒܐܝܠܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܢܐܟܘܠ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܦܐܪ̈ܘܗܝ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܚܫܚ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܢܩܒܠ ܗܘܐ ܡܢ ܩܢܘ̈ܢܐ ܥܕܬ̈ܢܝܐ. ܘܢܬܦܩܕ ܒܙܗܝܪܘܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܬܘܒ ܢܥܒܕ ܗܕܐ܀ ‘Addai: Concerning a priest who writes a note of excommunication and hangs it on a tree, so that no one eats from its fruits. Jacob: He should receive a punishment based on the ecclesiastical canons and should be carefully ordered that he not do this again.’

[876] These are all literary references. For a papyrus which reflects every-day expenses of a Christian community somewhere in northern Mesopotamia (ca. 240 AH/AD 854), see G. Khan, *Arabic Papyri: Selected Material from the Khalili Collection* (London/Oxford, 1992), pp. 84-91.

and bequests from elites and from the proceeds from agricultural lands, mills and rents from properties the monasteries owned. Then as now, when it came to endowments, there were haves and there were have nots. 'It is not right,' Jacob of Edessa wrote in one of his canons, 'that priests should go from church to church out of greed or a desire for fatter church endowments.'[877] There were also haves and have-nots when it came to monks and ascetics. In his treatise on taxation and administration, the *Kitāb al-Kharāj*, the Muslim jurist Abū Yūsuf (d. 182 AH/AD 798) would specify that the *jizya*, or poll tax on non-Muslims, should be taken only from monks living in monasteries if they were wealthy; if they were poor, it was to be paid on their behalf by wealthy monks. Similarly, the *jizya* was to be paid by solitaries living in towers (*ahl al-ṣawāmi'*) if they were wealthy; if, however, they had turned their wealth over to someone who would dispense it to monasteries, then those monasteries were to pay the *jizya* on behalf of the solitaries, unless the abbot swore that they no longer had possession of the wealth which had been passed on to them.[878] One example of such a monk who gave his wealth away was the Chalcedonian Stephen of Mar Sabas (d. 794) who, we are told, gave everything which he had inherited to monks and to churches.[879]

Part of what it meant to be a member of the Christian elite was to provide Christian institutions with gifts and money. When the Persian King of Kings released Mar Aba (d. 552) from prison he dispatched him to return to his normal way of life: 'He sent him,' the *Life* of Aba tells us, 'to go and adorn churches, as was his custom and to go

[877] Mardin 310, fols. 208b-209a: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܡܛܠ ܪܓܬܐ ܕܐܫܬܘܩܪܘܬܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܕܡܬܪ ܥܬܝܪܝܢ. ܢܫܢܘܢ ܒܪܘܚܐ ܡܢ ܥܕܬܐ ܠܥܕܬܐ
[878] See Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm, *Kitāb al-kharāj* (Cairo, 1346), p. 146.
[879] See Lamoreaux, ed. and trans., *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas*, (Arabic), p. 11; (ET), p. 11.

to his home and his church and to assemble the bishops, as was his custom…'[880] Being a Catholicos, which Aba was, entailed the beautification and embellishment of churches just as much as it involved gathering bishops together to deal with ecclesiastical concerns. When Athanasios Gamolo's father died in the late sixth century, his pious mother Joanna gave the family's wealth to churches and to the poor.[881] Also in the late sixth century, the East Syrian Rabban Barhadbshabba founded a monastery near his native village of Hadod. 'He gave large gifts to his monastery,' Thomas of Marga tells us, 'and bequeathed to it all his inheritance of the house of his fathers.'[882] The *Life* of Timothy of Kākhushtā reports the Bishop of Qinnasrīn giving a large number of dirhams, dinars and other things to Timothy's monastery.[883] In the early eighth century, Simeon of the Olives, the bishop of Harran, was responsible for building a number of churches and monasteries. But he also funded the production of books, as his *Life* reports:

> [Simeon] also gave money and many royal and excellent books were copied, many of which exist until today in the Monastery [of Qartmin] and in the region—some of the books of Mar Daniel Kandarībāyā, and some other books

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[880] See P. Bedjan, ed. *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha, de trois autres patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques, nestoriens* (Paris, 1895), p. 267: ܘܫܠܚ ܠܗ ܕܢܐܙܠ ܘܢܬܒ ܥܠ ܟܘܪܣܝܐ ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܐ: ܘܢܐܙܠ ܠܒܝܬܗ ܘܠܥܕܬܗ: ܘܢܟܢܫ ܠܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܗ

[881] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 388 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 375 (FT): ܘܟܕ ܡܝܬ ܐܒܘܗܝ܇ ܐܬܝܬܡܘ ܗܘ ܘܣܘܝܪܘܣ ܐܚܘܗܝ ܥܡ ܝܘܚܢܢ ܐܡܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ܂ ܗܝ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܗܘܬ ܢܟܦܬܐ ܘܨܝܡܬܐ ܘܪܚܡܬ ܡܣܟܢܐ. ܟܕ ܗܟܢ ܠܥܘܬܪܐ ܕܫܒܩ ܒܥܠܗ̇܇ ܠܡܣܟܢܐ ܦܪܢܣܬܗ ܘܠܥܕܬܐ. 'And when his father died, he and Severos his brother were left orphans with their mother Joanna. She was pious, a faster, and a lover of the poor. For this reason, she distributed the wealth her husband left her to the poor and to the churches.'

[882] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 68-69. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 38: ܘܐܘܗܒ ܠܕܝܪܗ ܘܗܒܬ ܠܗ̇ ܟܠܗ̇ ܝܪܬܘܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܒܗܘܗܝ܇ For the date of Barhadbshabba's activity at Hadod around the year 595, see *ibid*., p. lxxii and Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, pp. 255-256.

[883] See J.C. Lamoreaux and C. Cairala edd. and trans., *The Life of Timothy of Kākhushtā* (*Patrologia Orientalis* 48) (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 476 (Arabic), 477 (ET). NB: This Qinnasrīn is the same as the city of Chalkis and is not to be confused with the monastery of Qenneshre, cf. e.g., Brock, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, p. 29, n. 7.

> like it. One of those books is that *Chronicle* whose text is long—it was composed by Jacob of Edessa. These and many other books were copied for the monastery at the hands of superior scribes and spiritual and fleshly brothers: Mar Joshua Simon and Mar Yaḥe as well as the expert craftsmen and wise scribes who are in the great monastery which is in the excellent and celebrated village of Kfar Tebnā which is at the gate of the city of Ḥarran, which is the diocese of Mar Simeon of the Olives.

After Simeon's death, the *Life* notes, another 180 of his books were given to the monastery.[884] Simeon's donation of books to the Monastery of Qartmin was of course not unique. The *Chronicle* of Pseudo-Zacharias Rhetor, for example, speaks of a Moro bar Kustant, a bishop of Amid in the early sixth century, who amassed a large library which passed into the possession of the church of Amid after Moro passed away,[885] and a number of notices in manuscripts point to the practice of bishops (and others) of buying books for monasteries and churches.[886]

And books were not the only objects given to monasteries by elites. The nephew of Simeon of the Olives, David, was like his uncle Simeon very generous in lavishing gifts on the monastery of Qartmin. 'He donated many glorious and royal things to the monastery,' the *Life* of Simeon tells us,

> and to the entire region of Tur 'Abdin and he decorated and adorned the monastery with all the spiritual and physical fixtures which are in the church: the container (ξέστης) for the myron (μύρον) and priestly garments (φελόνια) and patens (πίνακα) and gold and silver chalices and as well as liturgical instruments and veils for the consecrated bread and gilded curtains, the likes of which things there is nothing in the world.[887]

[884] Mardin 8/259, fols. 123r-123v.

[885] See F.J. Hamilton and E.W. Brooks, trans., *The Syriac Chronicle known as that of Zachariah of Mitylene* (London, 1899), p. 209.

[886] See, e.g., BL Add. 14,430 (p. 15); BL Add. 12,135 (p. 24); BL Add. 17,119 (p. 71); BL Add., 14,472 (p. 81); BL Add. 14,479 (p. 86); BL Add. 14,678 (p. 133); BL Add. 14,485 (p. 146); BL 14,486 (p. 149); BL 14,487 (p. 152). Page numbers refer to W. Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vols. 1-3 (London, 1870-1872).

[887] Mardin 8/259, fols. 123v-124r.

The *Book of Governors* of Thomas of Marga allows us to trace the fate of some of the wealth of the East Syrian monastery of Beth ʿĀbe northeast of Mosul in the seventh and eighth centuries. After becoming Catholicos around the year 650, Ishoʿyahb III came into conflict with the monks of Beth ʿĀbe, where he wanted to build a new school. 'I have the power to build for two reasons which must overcome all obstacles,' Thomas of Marga reports him telling them, 'first, because I have adorned and endowed this monastery with property and earthly possessions, and secondly, because spiritually, I am master of all monasteries and convents.'[888] George I (sed. 661-680) was Ishoʿyahb's close friend and chosen successor as East Syrian Catholicos.[889] According to Thomas of Marga, George came from a wealthy family which owned two villages, Tella d-Zāle and Beth Ḥabā. Before entering monastic life, George's father had given him the task of administering the affairs of these villages. 'Now when his father departed from this world,' we are told, 'George asked his brothers that, with respect to inheritance, the portion to be given to him be the village of Beth Ḥabā. And he gave it to this monastery [sc. Beth ʿĀbe].'[890] Some forty years later, the property given to the monastery seems to have slipped away from the monks. Thomas of Marga reports Gabriel, the Metropolitan of Kirkuk (fl. AD 720) speaking to the monks about their current economic situation: 'He

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[888] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 149-150. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1 (London, 1893), pp. 75-76: ܘܐܝܬ ܠܝ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܗܢܐ: ܡܢ ܬܪ̈ܬܝܢ ܥܠ̈ܠ ܕܠܟܠ ܚܘܣܟ̈ܝܢ ܙܟ̈ܝܢ: ܕܐܝܟܐ ܗܕܪܬܗ ܠܗܢܐ ܕܝܪܐ: ܒܐܘܣܝܐ ܘܒܩܢܝܢܐ ܐܪ̈ܥܢܝܐ. ܘܕܡܪܐ ܪܘܚܢ ܕܐܢܐ ܫܠܝܛ ܥܠ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܘܡܪ̈ܐ ܘܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ. See also Budge's discussion of this incident in vol. 1, pp. xcv-xcvi.

[889] See Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 208. For George's dates, see E.A.W. Budge, trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 179, n. 5.

[890] My translation. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 81: ܟܕ ܕܝܢ ܫܢܝ ܐܒܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܥܠܡܐ܆ ܐܦܝܣ ܓܘܪܓܝܣ ܠܐܚ̈ܘܗܝ܆ ܕܠܡܢܬܐ ܝܪܬܘܬܐ ܦܠܓܘܬܐ ܕܡܬܝܗܒܐ ܠܗ: ܬܗܘܐ ܩܪܝܬܐ ܒܝܬ ܚܒܐ. ܘܝܗܒܗ ܠܗܢܐ ܕܝܪܐ ܗܘܐ. Cf. the ET of Budge in E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 180.

left you nothing in the way of possessions in the land,' Gabriel said to them, referring to Jacob, the monastery's sixth-century founder, 'that is, for the monks. And what they did possess, look now—they are bereft of everything. That is, of the lands which their fathers Mar Isho'yahb and Mar George the Catholicoi bequeathed to them.'[891] Things were perhaps not as grim as Gabriel may have suggested. During the life of Rabban Kyriakos, the abbot of Beth 'Ābe from perhaps 740-750, Thomas of Marga could still speak about 'the wheat [which was] the property of the monastery' being brought in from Beth Ziwa and laborers supervised by overseers.[892] During the Catholicate of Timothy I (sed. 780-823), Shūbḥālīshū' inherited much wealth from his parents: he gave some to his sisters and gave his part to monastery of Beth 'Ābe. Shūbḥālīshū' eventually took over an estate owned by the monastery and ran it successfully as an agricultural enterprise, using its proceeds to help the monastery's monks, strangers and the poor.[893]

But we have information about more than just Beth 'Ābe. In the seventh century, the inhabitants of the village of Golai in Inner Salakh converted from

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[891] My translation. Syriac text in Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 114: ܠܐ ܐܘܪܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܕܡ ܒܐܪܥܐ ܡܢ ܩܢܝܢܐ: ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܠܝܚܝܕܝܐ: ܘܕܩܢܘ ܗܢܘܢ ܗܐ ܡܣܪܩܝܢ ܡܢ ܟܠܡܕܡ. ܗܢܘ ܕܝܢ ܐܪ̈ܥܬܐ ܕܐܘܪܬܘ ܐܢܘܢ ܐܒܗ̈ܝܗܘܢ: ܡܪܝ ܝܫܘܥܝܗܒ ܘܡܪܝ ܓܝܘܪܓܝܣ ܩܬܘܠܝܩ̈ܐ. Cf. the ET of Budge in E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 247; for the *floruit* of Gabriel, see vol. 2, p. 245, n. 5.

[892]Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 434: 'One year when the wheat [which was] the property of the monastery was being brought from Bêth Zîwâ, and by reason of the heat [of the day] the overseers were urging the labourers to get up to work in the morning while it was still dark, they complained…'. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 229: ܒܫܢܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܕܐ: ܟܕ ܡܫܬܩܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܩܢܝܢܐ ܕ. ܕܝܪܐ ܚܛܬܐ ܡܢ ܒܝܬ ܙܝܘܐ: ܘܡܢ ܚܠܦ ܚܘܡܐ ܐܠܨܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܦܩ̈ܕܢܐ ܠܦܥ̈ܠܐ ܕܢܩܕܡܘܢ ܠܥܒܕܐ ܒܠܠܝܐ: ܪܛܢܘ… Kyriakos, according to Budge, vol. 1, p. cxiii, was likely the abbot of Beth 'Ābe between 740 and 750 .

[893] For this, see Budge, *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 469-470. For Shūbḥālīshū''s date, see *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1 (London, 1893), p. lxviii.

Magianism to Christianity, 'they built a church in their village, and set apart certain nut trees and a small plantation that there might [always] be a sum of money for the maintenance and expenses of the church.' After the people that had converted passed away, a dispute arose between the priests of the church and the children of the donor generation, who seized the nuts for themselves.[894] Some time around 724, the monks of the monastery of Bar 'Īdta hired an Arab named Iyās to be the keeper of their grain and property. Iyās built a house on fields belonging to the monastery and then began seizing the monastery's lands for himself.[895] During the Catholicate of Jacob (sed. 753-772), Thomas of Marga reports that Arabs 'seized upon a mill called Beth Warda, which formed part of the possessions of the house of the Patriarch...and with little resistance called it their own property.'[896] Relating the possibility that Babai of Gebilta may have founded as many as 60 schools in the middle of the eighth century, Thomas of Marga notes 'that through the zeal of believing and God-loving men, who made the instruction [of children] in divine things their care, he set apart property and funds for

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[894] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 243 (see a second version of this story on pp. 652-653). Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 110: ܘܒܢܘ ܥܕܬܐ ܒܩܪܝܬܗܘܢ: ܦܪܫܘ ܠܗ ܐܝܠܢܐ ܕܓܘܙܐ ܚܡ̈ܪܐ ܩܠܝܠ: ܕܢܗܘܐ ܟܠܐܟܐ ܠܬܘܪܨܐ ܘܠܢܦܩܬܗ ܕܥܕܬܐ. The dispute was resolved by Īshū'zkha, the Bishop of Salakh, who was a contemporary of John, the Metropolitan of Adiabene (see vol. 1, pp. 240-242). John, in turn, was the nephew of 'Ananīshū', who had been a student with Isho'yahb III (d. ca. 658) (see Baumstark, *Geschichte*, p. 201).

[895] For the story of Iyās and the monastery of Bar 'Īdta, see Budge. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 231-234. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), pp. 104-105. For the date of this incident, see vol. 1, p. cvi.

[896] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 313. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 153: ܐܢ̈ܫܝܢ ܗܟܝܠ ܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܡܪ̈ܝܚܐ ܘܛ̈ܠܘܡܐ ܕܐܝܬ ܗܘܘ ܒܗ ܒܐܬܪܐ: ܚܛܦܘ ܪܚܝܐ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܐܘܩ̈ܦܣ ܕܒܝܬ ܐܒܗܬܐ: ܗܝ ܕܡܫܬܡܗܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܘܪܕܐ ܒܗ؛ ܠܒܪ ܕܒܘܪܣܝܐ ܥܒܕ ܩܕܝܫܐ ܡܪܝ ܐܝܚܢܐ: ܘܡܢ ܗܘܢ ܡܬܚܫܒܢܘܬܐ ܘܒܙܥܘܪ ܠܒܪ ܐܪܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܚܘܪܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܥܒܕܘܗܝ. See vol. 2, p. 313, n. 3, for the dates of Catholicos John.

their maintenance.’[897] In a letter which dates between 799 and 804, Timothy I writes Sergios, the Metropolitan of Elam,

> We have summoned Isho‘sabran the teacher and given him 10,000 *zūze*: 3,000 from Rabban Gabriel, 3,000 from ‘Aūn, 4,000 from another person. I have ordered that they buy with them the inn (πανδοκεῖον) of a certain Babai for the students of the monastery. A third of its proceeds are for the teacher and two-thirds are for the students. Now, before the coming of Isho‘sabran, we collected for the students, our brothers, 1,200 *zūze*. We gave the teacher a third and the brothers two-thirds, and one hundred *zūze* to each one of the two brothers who did the collecting.[898]

‘We wanted that the inn (πανδοκεῖον) which is called ‘Babai’s’—which you know—be bought for the students,’ Timothy had explained to Sergios in a previous letter, ‘so that they might have a little bit of money, to give them ease and help. For I did not want something to be bought for them that has a tax on it. ’[899]

The *Life* of Simeon of the Olives (d. 734) records Simeon’s extensive activities in providing means to support churches and monasteries throughout northern Mesopotamia and offers some of the clearest evidence we have about the economic bases of Middle Eastern monasteries in the early medieval period. Early in the *Life*, Simeon’s nephew David discovers a hoard of gold hidden in a cave. David would bring

[897] Translation E.A.W. Budge, in *idem*. trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 297. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 144: ܘܠܟܠ ܚܕ ܐܚܐ ܐܣܛܠܐ ܘܡܣܢܐ. ܘܦܩܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦܛܪܘܦܐ ܘܬܪܘܢܣܐ: ܒܡܣܟܢܘܬܗ ܕܠܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܕܢܣܒ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܢܬܠ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܟܠ ܘܠܦܘܪܢܣܐ ܐܠܗܝܐ

[898] *Letter 22*. See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 134-135: ܠܝܫܘܥܣܒܪܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܠܦܢܐ ܐܩܪܝܢܢܝ.. ܘܝܗܒܢ ܠܗ ܙܘܙܐ ܪܒܘܐ ܐܠܦܝܢ. ܬܠܬܐ ܡܢ ܐܠܦܝܢ ܕܪܒܢ ܓܒܪܐܝܠ. ܬܠܬܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܥܘܢ. ܐܪܒܥܐ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܢܫ ܐܚܪܝܢ. ܘܦܩܕܬ ܕܢܙܒܢܘܢ ܒܗܘܢ ܦܘܬܩܐ ܕܒܒܝ ܐܢܫ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܝܐ ܕܕܝܪܐ. ܘܬܘܠܬܐ ܠܡܠܦܢܐ. ܬܪܬܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܠܐܚܐ ܐܣܟܘܠܝܐ. ܩܕܡ ܡܐܬܝܬܗ ܕܝܫܘܥܣܒܪܢ: ܐܠܦ ܘܡܐܬܝܢ ܙܘܙܐ. ܘܝܗܒܢ ܠܡܠܦܢܐ ܡܢ ܬܘܠܬܐ. ܠܐܚܐ ܕܝܢ ܬܪܝܢ ܬܘܠܬܐ. ܘܠܐܚܐ ܬܪܝܢ ܕ ܟܢܫܘ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕܐ ܡܐܬܐ. LT in *idem*., trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), pp. 90-91. Bidawid dates *Letter 22* to the period 799-804; see *idem*., *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 75.

[899] *Letter 21*. See O. Braun, ed., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 74: SS 30) (Paris, 1914), pp. 132-133: ܘܡܢ ܟܕܘ ܕܢܙܕܒܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܝܐ ܦܘܬܩܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܬܩܪܐ ܕܒܒܝ ܕܝܕܥ ܐܢܬ. ܐܨܒܝܢܐ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܐܣܟܘܠܝܐ [ܠܐܣܟܘܠܝܐ] ܟܠܘܡܐ ܡܕܡ ܘܠܝܠ ܠܢܝܚܘܬܐ ܘܠܡܥܕܪܢܘܬܐ. ܠܐ ܓܝܪ ܨܒܝܬ ܕܢܙܕܒܢ ܠܗ ܡܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܡܕܐܬܐ. LT in *idem*., trans., *Timothei Patriarchae I: Epistulae I* (CSCO 75: SS 31) (Paris, 1915), p. 89. Bidawid dates *Letter 21* to the period 799-804; see *idem*., *Les lettres du patriarche nestorien Timothée I*, p. 75.

his uncle portions of the gold and Simeon put it to good use. He gave some to the poor, and to orphans and widows. But Simeon also used it to endow the monastery of Qartmin with property whose rents and crops could provide it with steady income. 'He began to buy many fields and farms and was giving them to the monastery of Qartmin,' the *Life* reports,

> With it, he was also buying houses and shops and mills and gardens and enclosures, and he was giving them to the Monastery of Qartmin; and the Monastery of Qartmin acquired possessions the likes of which do not exist in the world. He then adorned the monastery and built it anew again after its burning by the Persians, like Joshua son of Jehozadak (cf. Zechariah 6:11) for Jerusalem and the temple in it after the captivity and burning. As the Son of Jehozadak and Zerubbabel and Nehemiah restored it, in the same way this holy Mar Simeon of the Olives restored again the monastery through all of his divine plans and gifts.[900]

The report of the properties Simeon bought and their use and exploitation are perhaps the most detailed description of a monastic economy in Syriac:

> First, he bought the field of the monastery of the pillar in which Mar Simeon was enclosed and he bought fields and waters and springs and all of its estates, and he planted many olive trees in it, based on the waters of its springs, numbering 12,000 olive plants. He brought the plants from great distance, from regions far away, and he planted the olives with great care and much labor. Around them he built a high wall of stone and clay and bricks. And he enclosed it again with a second of reeds and a third hedge of thorn bushes and of *'elta* (a plant full of frightening thorns). He set up in it hired men and plows who were working in it and who were wholly occupied with the estate. In five years, it began to yield fruit. It grew large and very strong and there were in it many olives which were extremely rich. From them, light was provided for all of the monastery and the churches of the entire region of Tur 'Abdin. Monks would gather beneath the trees whenever the olives would fall to the ground. They would not shake [the trees], but would rather collect the olives and bring them to the monastery. There, the monks were helped by the amazing skills which Mar Simeon, the master of olives, possessed. This olive [harvest] of that estate became a great source of help for this entire region which is desiccated and dry of springs. On the basis of this matter of olives, Mar Simeon has been called, 'of the Olives,' until today.[901]

[900] Mardin 8/259, fol. 108v. The Syriac in this passage is somewhat obscure.
[901] Mardin 8/259, fols. 108v-109r.

Simeon did not only endow the monastery of Qartmin—he took care of other monasteries as well. His *Life* informs us that he also bought a ruined building outside of Nisibis in which there was a monastery. He then built new buildings for the monastery and adorned it; he made provision for its economic well-being as well:

> He also built south of the monastery a large splendid inn, (πανδοκεῖον) a resting place for wayfarers and merchants, the likes of which did not exist in the city; there was not even another which resembled it. He bought for this monastery five millstones and three gardens abounding in beautiful plants.[902]

Indeed, Simeon followed a pattern whenever he would build or restore a monastery or church: he would always endow it with shops, mills, estates and other sources of revenue. So, when he restored the Monastery of the Mother of God and the Monastery of St Febronia in Nisibis and built the Monastery of Mar Dimat, Simeon was sure to also make provision for their economic survival:

> For these three glorious monasteries which he built, he bought shops and sheepfolds and houses so that these could be established for the sake of their need—[that is] for lights or buildings, whenever they were in need of necessary monies.

These three monasteries were not the only ecclesiastical institutions that Simeon was taking care of. He had also built a church for St Theodore which he provided a mill for and he would continue to patronize the Monastery of Qartmin as well:

> He also built a building for the great mill north east of the Church of Mar Theodore, which he had built. He built a wall outside of the mill and a tower (πύργος) and completed it along with the outer wall of the city and also opened up for it a gate inside the city; it has been called the mill of Mar Simeon of the Olives down to today. And he gave this mill to the monastery of Qartmin. He bought beautiful baths (βαλανεῖα) and he donated them to the monastery of Mar Elisha which he had built. He wrote that everything which exceeded the need of these monasteries which he had built should come and arrive at his Monastery of Qartmin. In the case of each believer who would go down and communicate on the feast of that church, the monks of the monastery would

[902] Mardin 8/259, fol. 110v.

> take his first fruits for themselves. It was this that the Patriarch Julian sent to the monks of the monastery. And these places became great pillars and abundant sources of assistance for the Monastery of Qartmin; and in this way, he adorned the monastery with all manner of regal, good thing. He bought for it many villages and shops and mills.[903]

Simeon's activity as a patron to various church institutions would continue throughout his life. And even though he was made bishop of Harran, he would continue to support the Monastery of Qartmin in distant Tur 'Abdin. 'From Ḥarran,' the *Life* reports, 'Mar Simeon would send gold and silver and many gifts by means of his disciples and he would buy many fields and mills and shops and farms as well as gardens and enclosures and he would give to the monastery all the animal manure.'[904]

The continued monastic patronage of Simeon and other Miaphysite notables enabled a decoupling to occur: resources were now available for elite literature to be produced in non-civic spaces—the *polis* had lost its monopoly on high culture. And once these independent, self-perpetuating spaces of cultural production had been established, the fate of the learned traditions of antiquity was no longer inextricably tied to the fortune of the cities.

On Culture and Continuity

When I have spoken of an unbroken tradition of Late Antique learning that continued throughout this period what I have been referring to is the curriculum of study whose outlines I tried to trace out earlier. Study of traditional philosophy and learning continued unbroken through the so-called Dark Ages, but by the seventh and early eighth centuries the texture of the tradition had changed from what it was in the fourth century. Jacob's knowledge of the classical Greek tradition was different from

[903] Mardin 8/259, fol. 115r.
[904] Mardin 8/259, fol. 123v.

that of say, Gregory Nazianzen. In my first chapter, for example, I pointed out that Jacob cites passages from the now-lost ὁ πρὸς Νημέρτινον λόγος of Porphyry. But Jacob's knowledge of Porphyry, at least in this instance, is a mediated one: the three passages that Jacob quotes from this lost work can all be found cited in Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Julianum*. Surely this is no coincidence: Jacob knows Porphyry's work through his reading of Cyril rather than through reading Porphyry himself.[905]

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[905] Jacob cites Porphyry on the issue of divine providence. cf. BL Add. 12,172, fol. 107b: ܐܡܪ ܓܝܪ ܦܘܪܦܘܪܝܘܣ ܦܝܠܘܣܘܦܐ ܗܘ ܒܡܠܒܒܢܐ ܕܡܚܫܒܐ ܘܐܡܪ: ܒܡܐܡܪܐ ܗܘ ܕܠܘܬ ܢܡܐܪܛܝܢܘܣ ܡܛܠ ܒܛܝܠܘܬܗ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܗܒܠܐ܀ ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܪ ܢܕܒ ܠܗ ܕܒܛܝܠܘܬܐ. ܡܦܩܕ ܡܒܪܢ ܐܟܝܢ ܗܦܟܝܢ. ܒܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܗܢ ܡܛܠ ܥܦܝܪܘܬ ܕܝܠܬܐ. ܒܪ ܬܠܝܐ ܒܪܒܝܠ ܐܬܬܣܝܡܘܢ ܚܫܡ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܒܠܚܝܐ. ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ. ܡܛܠ ܗܘ ܓܒܢܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܬܪܝܢ ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܡܚܘܘܢ ܠܒܢܝܢܫܐ. ܒܠ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܗ ܢܣܒܘ ܡܪܢܝܬ. ܒܪ ܡܛܠ ܚܡܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܬܒܪܢܫܝܢܘܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܬܪܝܢ ܗܘ ܠܗܘܢ. ܦܪܡ ܚܡܠܛ ܘܚܡܠܛ ܘܚܡܝܢ ܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܒܠܚܝܐ ܗܢܐ܀ Another passage is cited on fols. 107b-108a: ܦܘܪܦܘܪܝܘܣ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܕܠܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܢܦܫ ܗܘܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܢܐܡܪܝܢ ܡܚܘܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܕܐ ܒܠ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܥܩܡ. ܠܗ. ܕܪܒܘ ܢܕܒ ܐܠܐ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ. ܕܡܢ ܒܠܦܪܘܣ. ܗܕܐ ܗܘܬ ܕܦܦܫܝܐ. ܐܝ ܓܝܪ ܠܐ ܐܬܬܣܝ ܠܝ: ܕܦܘܪܢܘܣܐ ܡܛܠܬܐ ܘܠܝܬܐ ܢܥܝܡ ܒܠܬܪܒܝܬ ܕܗܦܟܐ ܒܥܪܪܐ. ܡܢ ܒܠܦܪܘܣ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܦܟܝܢ ܕܪܦ ܕܢܝܫܒܪ. ܕܡܒܝܐ ܐܬܬܣܝ ܗܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܦܦܫܝܐ. ܕܢܗܘܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ. ܓܝܪ ܠܝ ܡܢ ܕܕܚܡܬܐ ܡܕܡ ܕܪܥܝܢܘܬܐ ܡܛܠܬ ܠܝ ܕܬܐܬܐ ܦ ܒܝܬ ܒܣܝܥܐ ܡܢ ܚܠܒܐ ܗܘ ܕܗܘܪܒܐ ܦܐܡ. ܡܛܠ ܗܝ ܕܦܦܫܝܐ ܠܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܡܬܬܦܣܘ ܐܝܬ ܠܒܢܝܫܐ. [......ܬ] ܠܐ ܡܢ ܐܢ ܗܘܬ ܕܡܬܦܫܬܐ ܠܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܬܠܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܒܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܡܒܠܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܗܘܢ ܕܐܬܝܣܝܬ ܪܥܝܢܘܬܐ. ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܒܪ ܚܟܪ ܐܝܬ. ܠܐܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܦ ܒܪ ܡܛܠ ܦܠܛ ܐܝܬ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܠܒܠܗܘܢ ܗܝ ܕܢܝܒܘܢ ܢܛܪ ܐܝܬ. ܡܛܠ ܒܝܬ ܕܐܦܠܐ ܦܦܫܝܐ ܗܘܬ ܗܕܐ ܠܒܠܗܘܢ. ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܕܒܠܚܝܐ ܕܒܠܗ ܗܢܐ ܚܦܪܘܬ. ܐܠܐ ܢܦܫ ܕܕܠܐ ܒܪܠܐ ܚܦܪܘܬ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܠܗ. ܐܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܕܥܦܝܪ ܢܗܘܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܝ ܠܒܠܗܝ ܐܬܬܕܒܪܬ ܠܗ. ܒܪ ܐܦ ܒܢܪ ܚܡܘܬܐ ܡܬܢܫܝܢ ܘܒܢܪ ܣܘܠܩܐ: ܘܒܢܪ ܠܐ ܡܬܚܝܡܘܬܐ ܕܡܬܚܡܬܐ܀ and a third passage from the same treatise is cited on fol. 108a: ܠܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܕܝܢ ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܦܦܫܝܐ: ܘܡܛܠ ܦܘܠܝܛܝܐ ܡܬܒܠܒܠܬܐ ܕܒܠܗܘܢ ܘܕܒܠܚܘܕܘܬܗ: ܐܝܢܐ ܠܐܝܢܐ ܒܠܝܫ ܡܢ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܐܪܐ ܒܐܝܕܐ. ܐܠܐ ܡܢ ܒܪܘ. ܘܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܕܝܢ ܗܦܐ ܐܢܬܘܢ, ܕܒܠ ܦܝܪܘܫܐ ܘܐܫܒܚܐ. ܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܐܦܩܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܒܝܬ ܒܣܢܝܩܐ ܒܐܘܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܡܢܗ ܐܬܬܡܢܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢܗܘܢ: ܕܒܪ ܦܪܡܝܢ ܕܢܝܡ ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܬܪܝܢ ܕܡܬܕܪܥܝܢ ܠܒܠܗ ܦܓܪܐ: ܠܗܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܢ ܚܡܘܬܐ ܢܦܫܢܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܢܦܫܐ: ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܡܬܪܘܢ ܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܢܘܣܐ ܕܒܠܗ ܦܓܪܐ: ܐܝܟ ܬܗܘܐ ܕܐܚܡܬܐ ܘܡܬܪܒܝܢܘܬܐ ܒܪ ܦܪܝܡ ܘܫܝܢ: ܐܦ ܒܒܝܡ ܘܡܬܪܡܝܢ ܣܝܒܪܬܐ: ܘܒܪ ܛܒ ܬܪܒܝܢ ܐܢܫ ܕܡܛܠ ܦܘܪܢܘܣܐ ܕܒܠܗ ܦܓܪܐ ܗܦܟ ܗܕܐ ܐܫܟܚܐ: ܐܝܟܐ ܕܝܢ ܣܒܝܡܐ ܒܪ ܦܪܝܒ ܡܣܬܦܩ ܠܗ ܠܐܫܟܚܐ: ܘܐܦ ܡܬܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܒܠܗ ܡܢ ܥܒܕܐ ܒܪ ܒܒܠܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܦܦܫܝܐ: ܐܠܗܐ ܕܝܢ ܒܠ ܐܦܩ ܡܢ ܡܦܘܬܐ ܕܒܠܗܐ: ܥܒܝܡ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܝ ܕܦܠܛܐ ܘܡܬܪܢܘܬܐ: ܕܢܒܪܬ ܘܐܡܐܠ ܚܕ ܐܢܫ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܚܪܢܐ: ܐܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܝ ܒܒܐ ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܒܠܗܝ ܙܠܝܐ: ܠܘܬ ܗܝ ܕܦܦܫܝܐ ܘܡܬܕܪܐ ܠܒܠܗ ܦܓܪܐ. ܐܠܘ ܓܝܪ ܒܝܬ ܡܢܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܕܠܡܬܥܒܕܬܐ ܐܠܗܘܬܐ ܢܦܩܕ ܘܢܒܝܢ ܐ. ܢܕܒܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܠܦܪܘܣ. ܕܠܛܠܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܐܝܟܐ ܕܡܛܠ. ܕܠܗܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܒܗ ܒܥܘܪܢܐ ܚܠܐ ܕܢܐܬܘܢ ܠܗܦܟܐ: ܠܗܠܝܢ ܕܝܢ ܦܪܡ ܡܥܘܕܒ ܕܒܠܬܪܝܢ ܕܢܩܦܝܢ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܡܠܛܢܘܬܐ: ܠܐܝܢܐ ܕܝܢ ܗܘ ܐܝܟ ܡܢ ܒܪܘ. ܫܠܛ ܐܝܡܪܐ ܕܥܦܝܪܘܬ ܕܝܠܬܐ ܡܬܘܒܬܐ ܥܡ A. Smith, *Porphyrii Philosophi Fragmenta* (Stuttgart, 1983), pp. 314-318, has collected the fragments of the πρὸς Νημέρτινον λόγος, all of which come from Cyril of Alexandria's *Contra Julianum*. Jacob's first passage corresponds to 280f in Smith's edition, his second passage corresponds to Smith's 282f, and his third passage corresponds to Smith's 279f. I am grateful to Aaron Johnson for guidance in Porphyrian matters. These portions of the *Contra Julianum* do not appear in the Syriac fragments edited by E. Nestle in C.I. Neumann, *Iuliani Imperatoris Librorum Contra Christianos Quae Supersunt* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 45-63.

Perhaps similarly, part of Severos Sebokht's citation of Plato's *Timaeus* had already been cited by Eusebios in his *Praeparatio Evangelica*.[906] John of Litarb writes to George of the Arabs, perplexed at allusions in Jacob's letters; John, for example, did not understand what exactly Jacob meant when he rhetorically asked why somebody would bring an owl to Athens.[907] Jacob had also referred to a story of a monkey, dressed and acting like a human: What was he speaking about? George explains Jacob's allusion by referring John back to the letter of Gregory of Nyssa to Harmonios. Gregory himself had not seen the monkey dressed and dancing like a human, but rather, it was a story related by the pagans.[908] The story in fact goes back to Lucian's work, *The Fisher*;[909] but Lucian has faded away and is now only a nameless pagan source. Gregory of Nyssa had known Lucian's work first hand; by the time we arrive at John of Litarb, he learns of Lucian's story from Jacob and George, who knew it through the medium of Gregory. John is now two or even three layers removed from the pagan Greek original. In the same way, when he explained the meaning of the expression to bring an owl to Athens, George would refer to Severos' using it in his work against John the Grammarian.[910]

A knowledge of classical culture has now become useful as a tool for decoding and understanding the works of the towering theological authorities of the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries. This trend towards the instrumentalization of classical culture in the service of Christianity is exemplified in sixth-century composition in Greek of the

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906 *Praeparatio Evangelica* 10.4; see See F. Nau, 'La cosmographie au VIIe siècle chez les Syriens,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 5 (15) 1910, p. 250, n. 2.

907 See BL Add. 12,154, fol. 275b (section 11.5.1 in my edition). This was the equivalent of the English expression 'to bring coals to Newcastle.'

908 See BL Add., 12,154, fols. 275a-275b (sections 11.3.1-11.3.3 in my edition). For Gregory of Nyssa's version of the story, see W. Jaeger, J.P. Cavarnos, and V. Woods Callahan, edd., *Gregorii Nysseni Opera Ascetica* vol. VIII.1 in W. Jaeger, ed., *Gregorii Nysseni Opera* (Leiden, 1952), pp. 131-132. ET available in V. Woods Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa: Ascetical Works* (Washington, DC, 1967).

909 See M.D. Macleod, *Luciani Opera*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1974), p. 73.

910 See BL Add. 12,154, fol. 276b, (section 11.5.3 in my edition).

mythological scholia of Pseudo-Nonnos whose aim was to explain classical allusions in the homilies of Gregory Nazianzen; they would have no less than two Syriac versions.[911] What we have here is a fusion of Christian and pagan learning, the creation of a new set of Christian textual authorities who stand on a par, and indeed, above, an older, pagan set. The latter are useful because they help one understand the former. We are on a road that will lead to the eleventh-century Christian Yaḥyā b. Jarīr writing a marginal note in Syriac and Arabic citing Gregory Nazianzen on a manuscript of a work al-Fārābī; Ibn al-Nadīm would include Gregory of Nyssa and John Philoponos' refutation of Nestorios among the philosophers in the *Fihrist*; Yaḥyā b. 'Adī the great (Miaphysite) Christian logician of tenth-century Baghdad would cite Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen and Pseudo-Dionysios among his authorities.[912] 'I am not a Patriarch or a leader, but am rather a lowly philosopher-monk,' Cosmas, the teacher of John Damascene told people who asked him what he was.[913] Philosophers were now Christian monks. The municipalities of Athens and Jerusalem had merged.

Towards a de-sectarianized history of the Middle East

Perhaps because the sources we have for Late Antique and early Medieval Near Eastern history are written by elites and come to us neatly classified by their sectarian affiliation—Miaphysite/Jacobite/Monophysite/West Syrian, Nestorian/East

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[911] In general, see S.P. Brock's, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia* (Cambridge, 1971).

[912] I take all these examples from J.W. Watt, 'Les pères grecs dans le curriculum théologique et philologique des écoles syriaques,' in A. Schmidt and D. Gonnet, eds., *Les pères grecs dans la tradition syriaque* (*Études Syriaques* 4) (Paris, 2007), p. 38. For Yaḥyā b. Jarīr and al-Fārābī, see R. Walzer, *Al-Farabi on the Perfect State: Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's Mabādi' Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila* (Oxford, 1985), p. 24. Walzer writes that the note refers to 'Gregory of Nyssa or some other Gregory.' Given Gregory Nazianzen's prominence and importance, it is much more likely that the Gregory referred to was Gregory Nazianzen; this, too, is how Watt understood it.

[913] *Lastu baṭriyarkan wa-lā ra'īsan bal rāhibun ḥaqīrun faylasūf.* See C. Bacha, ed., *Sīrat al-qiddīs Yuḥannā al-Dimashqī* (Harissa, 1912), p. 13.

Syrian/Church of the East, Chalcedonian/Melkite, Muslim, Jewish, etc.—the history we write often tends to reflect these divisions and leaves us with the impression that members of these communities existed in isolation from one another, or indeed, that individuals actually saw themselves as exclusively members of only one of these communities. The evidence for confessional confusion and fluidity I attempted to present in the previous chapters suggests that any history which treats the various Christian confessional movements in the Middle East in the Late Antique and early medieval period as clearly demarcated and distinct has engaged in a misleading reification based on normative texts.

Having written this, one might object that I have done precisely this. I have written well over 300 pages about the Middle East in the Late Antique and early medieval period and focused primarily on Christians who were there at that time. I am trying to tell a story of continuity but have done so by ignoring perhaps the most momentous event in the region's past 1500 years: the Arab conquests. What difference does Islam make? What does a truly de-sectarianized history of the Middle East look like?

It is to such questions that I will turn in the final section of this dissertation.

Part III: What Difference did Islam Make?

Chapter 9: On Christians and Muslims, I: A House with Many Mansions

'Yet as long as the Muslim population remained a minority or constituted only a bare majority of the entire population of a region, the society of that region as a whole was not an Islamic society, nor the culture of that region an Islamic culture.' Richard Bulliet[914]

Before we can try to answer the question, 'What difference did Islam make?' we need to first ask the questions 'What was Islam?' and 'What was Christianity?' In this chapter, my aim is to suggest some ideas for how we can think about answers to both these questions that will help provide fruitful and productive ways of looking at the question of ideological change in the early medieval Middle East. More specifically, I will devote myself in the present chapter to attempting to get a sense for the breadth of spectrum of possible Christian beliefs in the region in this period.

A weakness of discussions of early Christian-Muslim interactions is that they tend to leave uninterrogated the two most important words in the phrase: 'Christian' and 'Muslim.' For both of these categories, what it meant to be a Christian and what it meant to be a Muslim are supplied by the beliefs of confessional entrepreneurs[915] and theological elites whose normative texts are taken to represent the content of what being a Christian or being a Muslim was in the seventh or eighth centuries. In the case of Islam, the normative texts which supply our understanding of Islam in this period often come from the ninth or later centuries. But in the early period, we should never

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[914] See R. Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), p. 2.

[915] By 'confessional' (or spiritual) entrepreneur, I mean an individual whose aim or intent it is to help create a well-formed and well-bounded Christian community with a distinct identity in a place where such a distinct community had not existed—much like an economic entrepreneur seeks to start a business. I am grateful to Michael Woldemariam for having introduced me to the concept of the 'ethnic entrepreneur' who helps create new ethnicities and which stimulated my thinking on this topic.

forget that we are dealing with what Robert Hoyland refers to as 'pre-Sunnī Islam.'[916] In previous chapters of this dissertation, I have tried to show that there was a broad spectrum of beliefs and practices which persons who identified themselves as Christians held and engaged in, though only a slice of these beliefs and practices met with the approval of someone like Jacob of Edessa. We have, for the most part, no surviving texts from the people who engaged in these practices, in part because they were seen as aberrant, and know about them primarily through their reports and condemnations in sources like the large number of canons Jacob has left for us.

This limitation of our source material and the consequently constricted nature of our understanding are important to remember when we approach the question of early Christian-Muslim encounters. It is in fact strictly inaccurate to say that Islam encountered Christianity in the seventh century in Mesopotamia. What actually happened was that a group of people, part of whose identity included being Muslims, encountered a significantly larger group of people, part of whose identity included being Christians. But these people were other things as well—they were soldiers, farmers, merchants, carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, shepherds, herdsmen, weavers, craftsmen and more. They were parents, husbands, wives, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters. They belonged to clans. They were from specific towns, cities and regions. They spoke Greek, or one of a variety of dialects of Aramaic, or Arabic, or Persian or two or more of these. They were sedentary, semi-nomadic and nomadic. Each

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[916] Robert Hoyland is currently working on a book on pre-Sunnī Islam and I am grateful to him for conversations on this topic which have influenced my thinking both in this paragraph and in this chapter and the next more broadly. In particular the questions Robert asked me once at a dinner and the points he made to me on this topic stimulated me to think about this issue in a better and more clear way and were part of what prompted me to address some of the issues of this chapter and the next; he is of course not responsible for any of my many obfuscations, confused arguments and errors.

individual's identity was comprised of more than one axis, only one of which was religion, and for many people the religious axis did not seem to have been understood in primarily propositional terms—the sort of understanding of religion which is presupposed in Christian-Muslim dispute texts as being the most important—and moreover, the religious component of a person's identity was not necessarily the most important one and the one most predictive of patterns of behavior. What's more, for each of those individuals, 'Islam' and 'Christianity' had unique and non-identical meanings. Then, as now, neither Islam nor Christianity existed in a mind-independent reality, as a sort of Platonic form in the ether or some kind of Weberian ideal type; the only existence Christianity and Islam had was as a concrete, lived particular in the life of distinct individual believers and communities of adherents. We cannot, alas, recover all the various meanings which Islam and Christianity took in each of these unique instantiations.

Christian Diversity

We can suppose, however, that, at least so far as concerns Christianity, some of the meanings of Christianity included the sophisticated belief systems of theological elites like Athanasios of Balad, Jacob of Edessa, George of the Arabs and Isho'yahb III who have left us extensive writings. But 'Christianity' also included the beliefs of the Christians we have seen Jacob criticizing for a variety of (to us) strange behaviors. It might have included many other things as well: the Miaphysite priest who used the Bible as a means of persuading women in his congregation to sleep with him;[917] the

[917] See Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 148: ܐܕܝ: ܡܛܠ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܕܦܣܩ ܠܐܢ̈ܬܬܐ ܒܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ ܕܬܫܟܒ ܠܗ ܕܢܦܠ ܒܒܛܢܐ.. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܗܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܢ ܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܫܬܠܐ. ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܡܢ ܫܘܬܦܘܬܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܟܠܐ. ܠܐ 'Addai: ܡܛܠ ܕܒܥܝܪܐ ܗܘ ܒܠܚܘܕ. ܐܠܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܐܦ ܒܠ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܥܒܝܕܐ. ܐܬܚܫܒ ܒܟܬܒܬܐ ܕܐܠܗܐ܀

Lakhmid King Nuʿmān b. al-Mundhir (reg. 580-602), who is said to have made the pilgrimage to Mecca while he was a Christian—and before Muḥammad's prophetic career had even begun;[918] the Christian poet ʿAdī b. Zayd (d. AD 587), who would swear by the 'Lord of Mecca and by the Cross' in one of his poems.[919] And so on. There was a range of Christian beliefs and a gamut of understandings of what was encouraged, what was acceptable and what was forbidden by church leaders for Christians to do and to believe. When Arab conquerors rode into the Middle East in the 630s and 640s, the Christianity they would have encountered (and already knew from Arabia) would have included that of all these people, and more.

Just as there was a spectrum of practices and actions engaged in by Christians, only some of which ecclesiastical authorities regarded with approval, there was also a broad spectrum of doctrinal beliefs held by Christians. And this spectrum, it should be pointed out, extended beyond the traditional doctrinal typologies carefully laid out in modern patristic manuals and theological textbooks: there were of course Julianists, Miaphysites/ Monophysites/Jacobites, Chalcedonian Monotheletes, Chalcedonian Dyotheletes, and Nestorians/East Syrians: members of all these confessions invariably used the label 'Orthodox' to refer to themselves and 'heretic' to refer to others whom

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Concerning a priest who persuades a woman with the word of God and she consents that he lay with her. Jacob This one should not only be stripped of the priesthood, but should also be held back from communion. Not only because he is an adulterer, but also because he has made use of the Word of God for a repugnant act.'

[918] For al-Nuʿmān b. Mundhir's pilgrimage, see Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-buldān* (Leiden, 1302), p. 19. Lammens also pointed out that one of the pilgrimage stops near Mecca was known as the *mawqif al-naṣārā*, or 'station of the Christians.' For this point about al-Nuʿmān b. Mundhir and also the information about *mawqif al-naṣārā*, see H. Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʿawiya I[er],' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 267 and see *ibid*., p. 267, n. 8.

[919] For this, see H. Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʿawiya I[er],' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 268. For the poem, see L. Cheikho, *Shuʿarā' al-naṣrāniyya qabla al-Islām* (Beirut, 1999), p. 451. For the Christian poet al-Akhṭal swearing by the pagan deity Allāt, see Lammens, p. 302, n. 3.

they disagreed with. One corollary, however, of the chaotic situation 'on the ground' which I attempted to sketch out in Chapters 5 and 6 is that although such well-articulated doctrinal positions perhaps existed most strongly among theological elites, beyond highly literate and sophisticated churchmen in monastic centers—among what Jacob referred to as 'simple people' or 'simple Christians'— these labels may not have meant a great deal. Jacob, we saw in Chapter 3, was a spiritual elitist who believed that certain kinds of theological knowledge should be withheld from people who could not handle it, even to the extent that he encouraged dissimulation in the face of direct questions about matters which he deemed the questioner insufficient to deal with. Labels attaching to particular Christological stances are perhaps most helpful in helping to categorize the doctrinal positions of elite community leaders; beyond that, they are not good for much. I have devoted space to detailing some of the broad variety of practices engaged in by Christians in the seventh century. Now, I shall speak a bit about the gamut of Christian belief in this early medieval period.

Christian Believing

In Chapter 4, I pointed out that a problem confronting church leadership in the seventh century was one of manpower: there were not, apparently, enough priests to go around, at least in some rural areas. Jacob's canons suggest that on account of a shortage of clergy, Miaphysite priests might escort the funeral processions of deceased Chalcedonians. This also meant that one priest might be called upon to celebrate multiple Eucharists in one day, in a number of different villages. The *Life* of Theodota reports the holy man coming across a boy in a village who was so sick his grave had already been dug. The villagers begged Theodota to stay and wait for the boy's death

since they had no priest to escort the boy's funeral procession.[920] The potential impact of such a shortage (if it actually existed and was not merely an excuse for compromises or changed policy)[921] on the meanings Christianity might take for 'simple people' should not be underestimated.

We unfortunately have no seventh-century Menocchio whom we can point to in order to retrieve some of what people in places poorly served by clergy (or served by inadequately-trained clergy) actually understood their religious identity to mean. We do, however, have the *Life* of Simeon the Mountaineer (d. ca. 541), written by John of Ephesus, to suggest some of the effects that such a shortage might have had.

Simeon, we are told, would spend eight months of the year in the mountains and during the four months of winter would go to his monastery in order to escape the snow and cold. During one of his sojourns in the mountains, near the region of Claudia (an area located in contemporary southeastern Turkey and one that Theodota of Amid would later spend time in in the seventh century), Simeon was surprised to discover people and habitations in such a seemingly remote place. Speaking to some shepherds he encountered, he began to ask them about their religious background. 'How then,' Simeon inquired, 'as you live on these mountains, are you able to assemble in God's house, and to hear his word from the holy Scriptures, or to communicate in the mysteries of his body and blood?' The shepherds' response would prove shocking to Simeon: 'How, blessed sir,' they asked him, 'does the Eucharist that a man receives profit him? For what is the Eucharist?' Moved to tears and convulsions by such an answer, Simeon questioned the shepherds to find out their own self-identification: 'Tell

[920] For these points, see n. 561, n. 562 and n. 563, above.
[921] I am grateful to Peter Brown for this caveat.

me, my sons, are you Christians or Jews?' The subsequent exchange opens a small window into what Christianity may have meant to segments of the population who were poorly catechized and underserved by clergy:

> But they were indignant at these words and they say: 'O indeed, blessed man, we are Christians, do not call us Jews.' The blessed man says to them: 'And if you are Christians, how is it that you have mocked God and said of his living and holy body and blood in which our life and our souls' salvation consists, 'What does it profit us?' or 'For what is it?'? How is it that you were not frightened to perform with your tongues the acts of pagans and Jews, when you are as you say Christians?' They, when they saw the awe with which he expressed himself, became afraid themselves also, and they say: 'Forgive us sir, for we have no knowledge.' He says to them: 'And have you not heard the Scriptures, my sons?' They say to him: 'From our fathers we have heard; but the Scriptures themselves we have not seen.'[922]

These shepherds speaking to Simeon, John of Ephesus informs us, were about thirty years old. Simeon was curious to find out whether their nearly complete ignorance of Christianity was something exceptional, or whether it was indicative of the state of knowledge among Christians in the area:

> He says to them again: 'Are you, my sons, only in this state, or are all who are living on these mountains the same?' They say to him: 'Sir, it is not only we who are so, but there are men on these mountains which you see who, unless they have heard from their fathers, who carried them to church and had them baptized, do not know what a church is. And this same thing happens now also to those who have children born to them; on their account they go into a church and have them baptized; otherwise none of us has entered a church since he was born; but we live on these mountains like animals.'

At this point, Simeon corrects the men: the animals are actually better off than they are. They live in the state God created them and are obedient to Him. But the

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[922] Translation E.W. Brooks (with my slight alterations) in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), pp. 233-234.

shepherds are ignorant of the Eucharist and God's salvation: 'what hope do you have toward God? For lo! You are unaware even of what Christianity is.'[923]

From here, Simeon left the shepherds behind and went off, trying to make sense of what he had just seen and heard. He realized that perhaps it was God's will that he meet these people, so that he could stay and teach them. Simeon's description of their state offers us the perspective of a theological elite on such a group of uninstructed Christians. 'Henceforth I will not withdraw from this place,' he resolves

> unless these have been gained for God; since they are bound in error, and are as if they were not Christians. What pagan is there, or what other worshippers of creation, who for so long a period of time would neglect to pay honour to the object of his worship, and would not always worship that which is reckoned by him as God? These men neither worship God like Christians, nor honour something else like pagans; and they are apostates against the one and against the other.[924]

Simeon next came to a village in the same area and was excited to find a church there: 'Lo! here there is a sign of the presence of Christians.' Upon closer inspection, however, Simeon's delight quickly melted away: the church had fallen into disuse and was 'full of wood and stones and dust.' An old man approached Simeon to receive a blessing and Simeon took the opportunity to assess the spiritual condition of the village: 'Is there a priest here?' He asked. As with the shepherds, another quite revealing conversation ensues:

> [The old man] said to him: 'There has not been a priest here during these times.' And [Simeon] asked him again: 'And not even a brother [sc. a monk] or anyone whatever?' He said to him, 'There is none here.' Again he went on to ask him also, 'Where do you take the Eucharist?' He says to him, 'If one of us has business and has happened to be present in one of these villages, he takes; if not, no one here has this concern for the Eucharist.' He says to him: 'On what

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[923] Translation E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), p. 235.

[924] Translation E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), p. 236.

> account have you no priests?' He says to him, 'It is not our custom.' He says to him: 'And how are you Christians, when you do not follow the custom of Christians?'[925]

The next day, Simeon convened a meeting in which every man, woman and child in the village was present and berated the people there for not being concerned for their own salvation. Like the shepherds, these people were in a worse state than the animals:

> For what reason then do you make yourselves like the animals on the mountains? And wherefore are you like them delivered indiscriminately to death, in that you hold aloof from hearing God's word, and are moreover deprived of the communion of the venerated body and blood of God, and this is not reckoned by you as anything?

Shocked, the villagers were left speechless by Simeon's tongue lashing. 'Do you not speak?' he asked them. They again offered a revealing insight into the nature of Christian belief—at least at the propositional level—among people who lacked proper teaching and instruction. 'What, sir, can we say to you?', they responded, 'There is no one to say anything to us or teach us; and this which you say has never reached our ears since we do not know the Scriptures.' Simeon began to question them about the basics of the faith: 'Know you not that our Lord Jesus Christ came down from heaven, and clothed himself in our body from a Virgin for our salvation, and consorted with men as a man? Are you aware of these things, or not?' Knowledge of the Christian story seemed to have been a function of age in this particular town; there was no priest now, but perhaps a long time ago there had been. 'The old men among them,' John of Ephesus reports, 'say to him, "Yes, sir, we hear these things.'[926] Simeon went on, becoming quite exercised, and asked them rhetorically if they had heard of further

[925] Translation E.W. Brooks (I have made some slight alterations), in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), pp. 236-237.

[926] Translation E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), pp. 238, 239.

details of the Christian message. 'How then, when you have heard all these things and know them, as you say, do you treat with contempt and pay no regard to your souls' life, and remain deprived of the word of life in the holy Scriptures, and hold aloof from the communion of Christ's body and blood, and do not consider that any loss falls upon you from this, whereas you suffer not loss of some small thing, but utter destruction of your souls?'[927] As penance, Simeon ordered the people of the village to fast and pray for a week.

This was not the end of the problems Simeon found there, however. As I noted, when Simeon had asked a question about basic Christian belief, it was the old people in the town who had had familiarity with it. He also wanted to know why the youth had failed to receive proper Christian instruction. 'For what reason,' he asked the villagers, 'have your sons not been made sons of the covenant (sc. monks), and been instructed and placed in this church and been making you hear God's word?' The answer Simeon receives suggests that the demands of rural life often conflicted with proper Christian instruction: 'They say to him, 'Sir, they have not had time to leave the goats and learn anything.' Simeon was dealing with the same sort of 'simple people' which Jacob of Edessa and Marūtha had dealt with: 'The blessed man, marveling at the people's simpleness and carelessness, made the Eucharist, and communicated them.'[928] Simeon next embarked on a project of re-evangelization of the people living in this mountainous region, bringing people to the small village church 'and converting them

[927] Translation E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), p. 240.

[928] Translation E.W. Brooks (with slight alteration), in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), p. 241.

afresh, as if from paganism.'[929] He would go on to tonsure a number of youths for monastic life and would spend a total of 26 years teaching and carrying out his work of Christianizing the Christians of this mountainous region.[930]

The mountain people whom Simeon devoted his life to teaching represent an extreme end of the spectrum of possible Christian belief. John of Ephesus presents their Christianity as one almost purely in name: apart from perhaps an infant baptism and a staunchly held belief that they were Christians—and not Jews—for many of them, 'Christianity' seemed very nearly contentless. John's portrayal, however, was likely inaccurate: even if these people lacked knowledge and experience of the rituals and texts which were most centrally tied to the normative, elite Christianity practiced and propagated by the likes of Simeon (and John himself), the people no doubt engaged in practices and held beliefs—the sorts of things which Jacob condemned and called 'pagan' in his canons—which drew upon Christian symbolic resources. It should be recalled, for instance, that when Simeon came to the forlorn and unused church in the mountain village, an old man had approached him to receive a blessing when he entered the church.[931] In other words, a Christian holy man or monk was seen, at least by some of the older generation in that particular village, to possess special powers of some kind. If nothing else, Christian paraphernalia and appurtenances in this context remained highly charged, something which would not have been the case in a purely 'pagan' environment which had no previous exposure to Christianity at all. For the

[929] Translation E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., ed. and trans., *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I) (*Patrologia Orientalis* 17) (Paris, 1923), p. 242.

[930] For his 26 years of ministry, see Brooks, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I), p. 246.

[931] Brooks, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* (I), p. 237.

most part, however, we unfortunately do not know what rituals and beliefs, shadows of Christianity, as it were, might have existed in such a thinly Christianized context.

If these mountain people represent one extreme on the spectrum of possible Christian belief, it is worth pointing out that figures like Simeon the Mountaineer, John of Ephesus, Athanasios Gamolo, Athanasios of Balad, Jacob of Edessa, and George of the Arabs represent the opposite extreme, perhaps equally unrepresentative of what Christianity may have meant to the mass of people who were Christians in the seventh and eighth centuries when Arab invaders and settlers first encountered the native Christian populations of the Middle East. Between these two opposite ends of the spectrum—sophisticated erudition and nearly complete innocence of the influence of normative sources and church authorities—there was a broad middle ground. And in this middle ground, education and elite status was no guarantor of proper orthodox belief.

Simeon had asked the shepherds he met whether they were Jews or Christians. Though they apparently knew almost nothing about Christianity, they were adamant that they were Christians. At perhaps roughly the same time, the East Syrian Mar Aba (d. 552) would have a similar experience, but would get a different answer. At this point in his life, Aba had not yet become a Christian. Crossing the Tigris on a small boat with others, he threw a student off of the boat, not once, but twice, each time making him disembark and get back on the shore. Each time, fierce waters forced the boat to return to the shore before it was able to cross. After Aba and the others on the boat were forced to disembark a second time because of the river's agitation, he cast his glance at the student who was sitting on the bank:

And as the Blessed One looked at his habit, which was chaste and different, he grew confused in his mind—perhaps he is not a monk of Christ, but rather maybe a Marcionite or a Jew. He asked him and said to him: "Are you a Jew?" He said to him, "Yes." He says to him again: "Are you a Christian?" He says to him, "Yes." He says to him again: "Do you fear the Messiah?" He says to him, "Yes." And he was worked up by these things with which that student had answered him. He says to him, "How are you a Jew and a Christian and a follower of the Messiah?" (For he calls a Marcionite a 'Christian,' in accordance with the custom there). The student says to him, "Secretly, I am a Jew, [cf. Romans 2:29] and I worship the living God and I believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. I flee from serving idols and from all impurity. I am a Christian in truth and not as the Marcionites [are], erring and calling themselves 'Christians"—(For 'Christian' is a Greek word and the translation of 'Christian' in Syriac is '*mshīḥāyā*')—'and as for what you asked me, "Do you fear the Messiah?', I truly do! And I turn away from every type of evil thing for the sake of true life!'[932]

When Aba finally allowed the student into the boat, the rough waters subsided and they were able to cross the Tigris without difficulty. The experience of meeting the student was a factor in Aba's eventual conversion to Christianity.

Unlike Simeon the Mountaineer's shepherds, Aba's student—presumably much better informed about the Christian faith than these simple mountain people—considered himself both a Christian and a Jew. The mere fact of education did not translate into a recognizably orthodox pattern of Christian belief. Apart from the well-known Christological positions that were clearly staked out by the seventh century,

[932] P. Bedjan, *Histoire de Mar-Jabalaha: de trois autres Patriarches, d'un prêtre et de deux laïques, Nestoriens* (Paris, 1895), pp. 213-214: ܘܟܕ ܡܬܒܩܐ ܗܘܐ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܒܐܣܟܡܗ ܕܢܟܦ ܗܘܐ ܘܡܫܚܠܦ: ܐܬܦܠܓ ܗܘܐ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܒܪܥܝܢܗ: ܕܠܡܐ ܠܐ ܗܘ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܗܘ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ: ܐܠܐ ܟܒܪ ܡܪܩܝܘܢܝܐ ܗܘ ܐܘ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ. ܘܫܐܠܗ ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ: ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܐܢܬ؟ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ: ܐܝܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܬܘܒ: ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܐܢܬ؟ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ: ܐܝܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܬܘܒ: ܕܚܠܐ ܐܢܬ ܠܡܫܝܚܐ؟ ܐܡܪ ܠܗ: ܐܝܢ. ܘܗܘܐ ܕܝܢ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܣܓܝ ܐܬܡܪܡܪ ܒܗܠܝܢ ܕܦܢܝܗ ܗܿܘ ܬܠܡܝܕܐ: ܐܡܪ ܠܗ: ܐܝܟܢ ܐܢܬ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܘܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܘܡܫܝܚܝܐ؟ ܩܪܐ ܓܝܪ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܠܡܪܩܝܘܢܝܐ: ܐܝܟ ܥܝܕܐ ܕܬܡܢ. ܐܡܪ ܠܗ ܗܿܘ ܬܠܡܝܕܐ: ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܐܢܐ ܒܟܣܝܐ: ܘܦܠܚ ܐܢܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ ܚܝܐ: ܘܡܗܝܡܢ ܐܢܐ ܒܒܪܗ ܝܫܘܥ ܡܫܝܚܐ ܘܒܪܘܚܐ ܕܩܘܕܫܐ. ܘܥܪܩ ܐܢܐ ܡܢ ܦܘܠܚܢܐ ܕܦܬܟܪܐ ܘܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܛܢܦܘܬܐ. ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܒܫܪܪܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܡܪܩܝܘܢܝܐ ܛܥܝܢ ܘܡܩܪܝܢ ܢܦܫܗܘܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ. ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܓܝܪ ܫܡܐ ܗܘ ܝܘܢܝܐ: ܕܐܬܦܫܩܗ ܦܘܫܩܗ ܒܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܡܫܝܚܝܐ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܫܐܠܬܢܝ ܕܕܚܠ ܐܢܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ: ܫܪܝܪܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܚܠܢܐ: ܘܡܬܪܚܩ ܐܢܐ ܡܢ ܟܠ ܓܢܣܝ ܡܛܠ ܚܝܐ ܫܪܝܪܐ. This is my translation, but partial ET and discussion of this passage can be found in D. Boyarin, *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, 1999), pp. 22-23.

there were still a number of other ‘heretical’ theological positions floating around. We saw in Chapter 2 that John the Stylite of Litarb had written to Jacob of Edessa about *memre* purporting to have been written by Jacob of Sarugh which contained strange doctrinal ideas, many of which seemed to relate to angels and to the idea of the image of God: Angels were created on the first day, along with the heaven and earth; angels were not created in the image of God; Adam was superior to both Michael and Gabriel; a sack with two holes in it, one for putting in and one for taking out, was a representation of what the image of God was; Satan fell on the sixth day, his sin being envy of Adam’s glory. Jacob would list other doctrines of this Ps.-Jacob of Sarugh, these stemming from an overly literal, ‘Jewish’ reading of the Scriptures: he apparently believed that God’s words reported in the first chapter of Genesis were spoken with an audible voice; he had a mistaken understanding of the meaning ‘Behemoth’ and ‘Leviathan’ in the book of Job; he thought that words like ‘form’ and ‘likeness’ and ‘body’ when referring to created beings could only refer to literal physical bodies.[933]

[933] For the first set of aberrant doctrines listed, see above, n. 488. For Ps.-Jacob’s literal reading of scripture, see: R. Schröter, ‘Erster Brief Jakob’s von Edessa an Johannes den Styliten,’ *Zeitschrift der Deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 24 (1870), pp. 270-271: ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܗܢܐ ܒܡܐܡܪ̈ܐ ܗܠܝܢ. ܐܦ ܫܒܪ̈ܐ ܐܚܪ̈ܢܐ ܘܓܘܚ̈ܟܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ: ܘܒܡ̈ܠܐ ܘܒܡܬܠ̈ܘܬܐ: ܘܕܠܝܬ ܒܗܘܢ ܘܠܐ ܫܪܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܘܝܘܬܪܢܐ. ܕܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇. ܐܦ ܗܝ ܕܢܣܒܪ ܕܒܩܠܐ ܐܫܬܡܥܬ. ܚܕܐ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒ ܕܐܡܪ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܗܘܝܐ ܕܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ. ܡܛܠ ܕܢܐܬܐ ܣܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܠܘܬܢ ܕܝܠܢ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܕܠܐ ܟܬܝܒܬܐ ܡܬܚܙܝܢܝܬܐ ܘܣܛܪ ܡܢ ܒܪܬ ܩܠܐ ܡܫܬܡܥܢܝܬܐ: ܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܗܘܝܢ ܕܢܩܒܠ ܘܢܐܠܦ ܣܘܟܠܗܘܢ܀ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܡܣܒܪܢܘܬܐ ܒܡ̈ܠܘܗܝ. ܐܝܟ ܗ̇ܘ ܕܣܢܝܩܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܐܘ ܣܢܝܩܝܢ ܪ̈ܘܚܢܐ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܡܬܗܘܢܢ̈ܐ: ܥܠ ܢܘܗܪܐ ܗܢܐ ܡܬܚܫܢܐ܀ ܐܦ ܒܪ ܕܝܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܣܦܝ̈ܩܬܐ ܘܒܛܝ̈ܠܬܐ ܒܪ ܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܡܢܐ ܐܡܪ. ܐܦ ܡܛܠ ܣܘܒܪ̈ܢܐ ܬܪ̈ܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܬܢܝܢ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܕܐܝܘܒ. ܡܛܠ ܗܝ ܕܡܬܦܫܩܝܢ ܒܥܝܪ̈ܐ ܒܪ̈ܝܐ: ܒܗܡܘܬ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ ܘܠܘܝܬܢ: ܘܠܐ ܝܕܥ ܕܡܢܐ ܐܬܐܡܪܘ. ܐܡܪ ܕܝܢ ܒܪ ܡܬܒܪܬ ܕܠܚܠܬܐ ܕܡܫܚܐ ܢܦܩ: ܘܡܦܩܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܚܠܡܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܟܬܝܒ̈ܢ: ܠܓܫܡܢܝܘܬܐ ܘܠܕܡܘܬܐ ܘܐܣܟܡܐܬܐ: ܒܪ ܟܠ ܚܠܡܝܢ [ܚܠܡܝܢ] ܒܪ̈ܝܬܐ ܓܫܡܢܝܐ ܘܐܣܟܡܐ ܘܕܡܘܬܐ ܡܦܣܪ: ܘܗܠܝܢ ܕܫܪܒܐ ܕܢܦܫܘܩ ܠܓܫܡܢܐ܀ ‘Now this man also has other idiocies and many ridiculous things in these *memre*, in many words and sentences in which there is neither truth nor profit. Among them are: his belief that one of those things which it is written that God said at the genesis of creation was heard as a voice, so that their meaning could come to us [i.e., so that we could know about it], which without visible writing and apart from audible speech, we would be unable to receive and learn their import. He has the idea in his words that spiritual beings needed or need this perceptible light. He also blathers empty and vain words, not

Here we have a case not of illiteracy and complete lack of education leading to theological error, but rather literacy in the absence of proper theological oversight on the part of Ps. Jacob's leaders. In many ways, being able to read the Bible and the Fathers was more dangerous than not being able to read them. Taken too literally, or not interpreted properly in light of other Fathers and tradition, a whole host of erroneous ideas might result. In 714, George of the Arabs wrote a letter to a figure named Joshua the Recluse, responding to a number of questions Joshua had about Aphrahat, whom George referred to as the 'Persian Sage.' One of Joshua's questions revolved around a passage in Aphrahat's *Demonstrations* in which Aphrahat suggested that human beings were born with one soul or spirit and then at baptism received a second spirit. Upon death, the natural spirit died, but the new spirit, which had been received at baptism, went to the presence of Christ.[934] As in the case of Ps.-Jacob of Sarugh's doctrinal aberrations, Aphrahat himself had veered into error. George advised John of Litarb that he should not wear himself out mentally trying to make sense of everything that Aphrahat wrote in his *Demonstrations*. 'For, although, as we said above,' George continued, '[Aphrahat] was a person with an acute nature who carefully crafted holy books, he was not among those teachers who were approved and who were said to have correct teachings.'

George had a positive view of Aphrahat, but he could not offer an unqualified endorsement of the fourth-century writer. The problems to be found in his writings

knowing what he is speaking about, concerning two matters that are brought forth in the Book of Job, concerning that which is called by Hebrew names—I mean the 'Behemoth' and the 'Leviathan'—and he does not know what they are. Arrogantly boasting, he says that he follows the word of Moses, but he accepts all these things which are written literally and in a Jewish, narrow way, supposing that for all created beings—'body,' 'form,' 'likeness,' etc.—belong to body [i.e., that all created things have bodies].' GT in *ibid*., p. 275.

[934] See BL Add. 12,154, fol. 250b, (section 7.4.2 in my edition).

were a result of a lack of proper ecclesiastical oversight and also perhaps of geography. Aphrahat was not among approved teachers with correct doctrine 'since there was no one in his day in that region who might take notice of him and adjust his thoughts and words to those of approved teachers. For this reason, there are many errors and clumsy passages in that book for one who is knowledgeable and who examines closely what he reads, as it is written.' As apparently had been the case with Ps.-Jacob of Sarugh, Aphrahat had strayed into the wilderness of doctrinal error through reading the Bible: Aphrahat's problem was that he had read the Bible too literally. This was the root of the errors and clumsy passages in the *Demonstrations.* 'Among such passages,' George wrote, 'are these things over which at present you have had uncertainty, O Brother. For when he heard Paul the Divine Apostle saying 'It is sown a natural body and rises a spiritual body,' and did not understand the sense and meaning of the passage, he came to write and say, 'when humans are dead, the natural spirit is concealed inside the body and sentience is taken away from it, but the heavenly spirit which they receive goes to its nature in the presence of Christ. Concerning the two of these, the Apostle makes known to us, for he said, "it is buried naturally as a body and it is raised spiritually as a body"' (1 Cor. 15:44).[935]

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[935] BL 12,154, fols. 250b-251a (section 7.4.3 in my edition) ܘܕܦ ܠܗ ܠܡܣܟܠܬܐ ܕܐܣܘܬܗ. ܕܠܐ ܗܘ ܗܠܝܢ ܡܬܒܠܢܐ ܒܚܝܪܐ ܘܡܬܬܒܠܢܘܬܐ ܒܣܦܪ̈ܬܐ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ. ܠܡܠܦܢ ܐܘ ܠܡܫܡܥ ܠܓܒܪܐ ܗܘ ܡܬܒܠܢܐ ܦܪܘܫܐ. ܐܡܟܝܠ ܕܡܢ ܗܪܟܐ ܐܬܥܛܝܣ ܒܝܘܬܪܢܘܗܝ ܘܐܬܓܒܠ ܒܐܪ̈ܒܥܬܗ. ܠܡܪܢܐ ܒܐܡܬܐ ܘܠܡܕܪ ܣܓܝܐ ܕܒܠܗܝܢ ܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܐܡܝܪ̈ܢ ܠܗ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܢܐ ܕܬܚܘ̈ܝܬܐ. ܘܐܝܟ ܓܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܡܢܐ ܕܐܡܝܪ ܡܢ ܠܟܠ: ܐܦ ܫܪܟ ܒܢܝܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܐ ܘܕܦܠܝܓܝ ܗܘܘ ܠܗ ܟܠܗܝܢ ܡܘܕܥܢ. ܒܗܢ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܦܓܪ ܠܗܘܢ ܡ̈ܠܘܐܬܐ ܫܠܡܘ̈ܬܐ ܕܡ̈ܠܘܐܬܐ ܫ̈ܠܡܬܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܓܒܪ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܝܘܡܝ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܗܘ: ܐܡܟܝܠ ܕܢܣܬܟܠ ܠܟܠܗ ܘܢܬܩܢ ܣܘܓܐܐ ܘܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܠܐ ܠܡܬܩܢܘܢ. ܘܟܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܦܓܪܐ ܩܕܡܝܐ ܘܡ̈ܠܐ ܕܦܓܪ ܚ̈ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬ ܒܗ ܒܟܬܒܐ ܗܘ. ܠܗܘ ܕܝܕܥ ܘܡܣܬܟܠ ܒܗܢܐ ܦܢܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܿܝ ܕܟܬܝܒܐ. ܕܒܗܘܢ ܕܡ̈ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܝܢ. ܐܦ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܗܫܐ ܐܬܦܠܓܬ ܒܗܝܢ ܐܚܘܢ ܒܪ. ܟܕ ܫܡܥ ܠܦܘܠܘܣ ܐܠܗܝܐ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܕܐܡܪ: ܕܡܙܕܪܥ ܦܓܪܐ ܢܦܫܢܝܐ ܘܩܐܡ ܦܓܪܐ ܪܘܚܢܝܐ: ܘܠܐ ܐܕܪܟ ܠܣܘܟܠܗ ܘܠܣܘܟܠܗ ܕܡ̈ܠܬܐ. ܐܬܐ ܠܡܟܬܒ ܘܠܡܐܡܪ. ܕܟܕ ܡܝܬܝܢ ܒ̈ܢܝܢܫܐ ܡܬܛܡܪܐ ܠܗ ܪܘܚܐ ܢܦܫܢܝܬܐ ܥܡ ܦܓܪܐ. ܘܪܓܫܬܐ ܡܫܬܩܠܐ ܡܢܗ. ܘܪܘܚܐ ܫܡܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܢܣܒܝܢ. ܐܙܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܟܝܢܗ ܠܘܬ ܡܫܝܚܐ. ܘܠܬܪܬܝܗܘܢ ܠܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܫܠܝܚܐ ܐܘܕܥ ܠܢ. ܐܡܪ ܓܝܪ ܕܡܬܛܡܪ ܦܓܪܐ ܢܦܫܢܐܝܬ ܘܩܐܡ ܦܓܪܐ

Perhaps six or seven decades after George was writing his cautionary words about Aphrahat, the East Syrian Māran‘ameh was sent by his Metropolitan Mar Aḥā into the region of Salakh on account of the strong presence of Magianism there. The people in that area, Thomas of Marga reports, were worshipping the sun, moon and stars; they even worshipped trees.[936] In this region there were also members of the landed aristocracy known in Arabic as the *shahārija* who, according to Thomas, ‘although they were nominally Christians, made confession that Christ was an ordinary man, and said that "He was one of the Prophets," and the Bishops who lived in the country labored among them, but they did not accept the true and orthodox doctrine.’[937] Where bishops had labored and failed, Māran‘ameh was more successful. After a miraculous display of light dawned upon them while worshipping in church, these heterodox *shahārija* were willing to confess the divinity of Christ.

Heretics in the Pews: On the Genealogy of Wrong Belief

There are, of course, other Christian sects that could be mentioned,[938] but rather than go on enumerating various different groups or individuals whose beliefs were irksome enough to cause an ecclesiastical writer in the seventh or eighth or ninth century to reach for his pen, I want to take stock for a moment. We have seen that in

ܪܗܛܪܘܬܐ ‘Your wisdom, o brother, should not understand or consider that Persian writer among approved writers or their expert compositions, with the result that on account of this you become vexed in your thoughts and weary in your mind [trying to] grasp and know the meaning of all the words that he speaks in that book of *Demonstrations*....’

[936] E.A.W. Budge, trans., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), p. 307.

[937] Translation Budge, in *idem*., trans., *The Book of Governors*, vol. 2 (London, 1893), pp. 309-310. Syriac text in *idem*., ed., *The Book of Governors: The Historia Monastica of Thomas Bishop of Marga A.D. 840*, vol. 1(London, 1893), p. 151: ܬܘܒ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܐܢܫ̈ܐ ܫܗܪ̈ܝܓܢ. ܕܐܦ ܒܫܡܐ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܗܘܘ: ܠܡܫܝܚܐ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܫܚܝܡܐ ܡܘܕܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܐܡܪܝܢ ܚܕ ܠܗ ܡܢ ܢܒܝ̈ܐ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ.، ܘܥܡܠܘ ܒܗܘܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘ̈ܦܐ ܕܗܘܘ ܒܐܬܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܩܒܠܘ ܡܠܦܢܘܬܐ ܫܪܝܪܬܐ ܘܐܪܬܕܘܟܣܝܬܐ.

[938] See, e.g., S. Pines’ ‘Notes on Islam and on Arabic Christianity and Judaeo-Christianity,’ *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 4 (1984), pp. 135-152, where he attempts to offer evidence for Christians showing ‘Judaeo-Christian’ proclivities in the Middle East on the eve of the Islamic period.

areas poorly served by priests (or served by poorly-trained priests), the level of knowledge of normative Christianity among the population could be quite low. At the same time, however, we have also seen that among the well educated and elite, a host of unorthodox doctrinal views might be held, everything from the Jewish-Christianity espoused by Mar Aba's student, to Aphrahat's belief in two souls and Ps-Jacob of Sarugh's belief that the image of God was a two-holed sack, to the low-octane Christology of the *shahārija*. The purpose of this sketch has of course not been to exhaust the possible Christian views available in the period which interests us—indeed, Mar Aba was a sixth-century figure, as was Simeon the Mountaineer. Nor has my aim here even to have been impressionistic. Instead, my goal has been rather simple: to show that a wide range of Christian views was both to be expected and did in fact exist, and that they did so *within* existing church structures and institutions. There is no need to posit hypothetical new groups and we need not strain to uncover previously unknown pockets where ancient heresies had survived in some sort of doctrinal Jurassic Park. Because of the nature of our sources, we only get a faint glimpse of the diversity which must have existed, but like a fuzzy and dim photograph of a rare and endangered animal, such a glimpse is precious indeed if we are seeking to understand what difference Islam made in the seventh and eighth centuries.

In discussing the religious views of these *shahārija*, Chase Robinson entertains and then rejects the notion that their reduced Christology was a function of Islamic influence; he similarly discards the idea that they have had some sort of connection to 'Judaeo-Christianity.' Robinson argues instead for explaining the Christology of this group of landed elites with reference to the ideas of Paul of Samosata, an (in)famous

third-century heretic who had argued that Jesus was merely a human.[939] I would like to focus for a moment on this last point, for it will take us to one of the most important points to be made about the question of Christianity and Islam with which I have begun this chapter.

Robinson's concern with supplying these *shahārija* with a proper heretical pedigree and connecting them with an arch-heretic like Paul of Samosata would have made Epiphanios proud; William of Ockham, however, would not have been as pleased—Robinson has simply over-explained his evidence. The example of the 'heretical' views of Ps.-Jacob of Sarugh which Jacob identified and the erroneous views of Aphrahat picked out by George show often that all that is needed to generate heresy is to read the text of Scripture and take it literally—what Jacob calls 'in a Jewish way'; to be more precise, it requires understanding the *wrong* passages of scripture in a literal fashion, since every Biblically-based theology is built on some combination of literal and figurative readings of the sacred writ. One possible way of understanding doctrinal orthodoxy is to simply see it as knowing which passages in the Bible to read literally and which ones to read figuratively in light of the literal passages which provide a control and framework for everything else; heretics are those who adhere to the wrong pattern of literal-figurative reading. To be a heretic then, one does not need to come into contact with an unbroken line of heretically-inclined teachers stretching back to a heresiarch living at some point in the classical patristic age. From the Ebionites to Paul of Samosata to the whole host of views in the fourth century which have been lumped together under the unhelpful name of 'Arianism,' to even today's Jehovah's Witnesses,

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[939] See C.F. Robinson, *Empire and Elites after the Muslim Conquest* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 98-101.

there have been plenty of people throughout Christian history who used the text of the Bible to justify a belief in a Jesus who was many things, but not divine, people who did not manage to arrive at the correct, 'orthodox,' combination of literal and figurative/allegorical in their reading of the Bible. Looking for the presence of a pre-existing, more ancient heresy to explain the origin of each of these heresies (and assuming that all of them were even coherent systems of doctrine and belief and not merely polemical constructs) is simply too much. All that is needed to explain them is basic literacy and access to at least portions of the Bible. If my attempt at sketching out what education looked like among seventh-century Christians was in any way accurate, people with these two qualifications may not have been all that rare.

In providing a genealogy of the *shahārija*'s views, Robinson tacitly and unwittingly buys in to a problematic and unsatisfying view of orthodoxy and heresy, one which gives orthodoxy both temporal and cognitive primacy. Orthodoxy precedes heresy, which is a falling away from a more primal standard. Heretical views furthermore are derivative mutations which are parasitical on original, pristine teachings. Orthodoxy is not only first in time, it is the default position. But orthodoxy should be seen as neither first, nor as a doctrinal default.[940]

Orthodoxy is no more natural a doctrinal position than being able to play perfectly a piece by Chopin on the piano is the natural starting point for a beginning player—or even for a person who has been playing for years. Like a musical piece, proper orthodox belief requires constant practice, training, instruction and correction to achieve. If orthodoxy is a fine musical performance and figures like Jacob of Edessa

[940] My thinking here has of course been influenced by W. Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, trans. Philadelphia Seminar on Christian Origins (Philadephia, 1971).

or Athanasios of Balad or Isho'yahb III virtuosi, then we should expect that heretical views would have been as common and as easy as poor, inexperienced, unpracticed piano playing. Rather than being an aberration, heresy would be the norm. Such an assertion, of course, cannot be proven—but neither can its obverse, that orthodox views among the mass of people were the rule rather than the exception. And a moment's reflection suggests that the notion that heretical views prevailed is a more plausible one—how many people, given a bow and arrow and told to shoot at a wall will hit the bull's eye, or even the target, without long, sustained training and practice? How many Christians today, even highly educated ones, could, if pressed, provide explanations of Trinitarian doctrine, or the Hypostatic Union, or even the nature of the Eucharist (according to whatever the official teaching of their church is), which do not veer into heresy after only a few sentences? If heresy lurks so close to the surface in church pews today, in post-industrial societies with high rates of literacy and where printing and the internet have made easily available a large range of highly sophisticated theological works to large swaths of people, how much more should we suppose that it was an ever-present fixture among Christians in the seventh and eighth centuries?

A more fruitful approach to understanding Christianity in the seventh and eighth centuries would be one which moved the focus away from doctrinal typologies and Christological hair splitting. There were, of course, groups of individuals who were intensely concerned with the subtleties of Christological doctrine. But if we assume such people were a minority, we can make better sense of the deep consternation and frustration at abuses and confessional chaos that comes through in the canons and

writings of Jacob of Edessa and others as well. What makes these *shahārija* Christians is the same thing which made all the people condemned in Jacob's canons for 'pagan' practices or for improper uses of the Eucharist Christians: a commitment to and belief in the power of certain shared symbols and rituals which were constitutive of the Christian community. These included the Eucharist, Baptism, anointing with the myron, the Cross, belief in the figure of Jesus as well as saints and holy men, the experience of the liturgy. These symbols and rituals served as focal points for the formation of a community; they did so in part because they provided a repertoire of tools for coping with the sorts of difficulties I spoke about in Chapter 6: worries about health and family, anxieties about crops and cattle, apprehension about forgiveness, death and eternal life. Their success as symbols around which a community might be able to coalesce was in a certain sense dependent on their ability to be the bearers of multiple and diverse meanings imputed to them by a large number of people: they were canvases upon which individuals could project their own particular understandings as they sought to deal with the material and spiritual challenges of existence.[941] For Jacob, the Eucharist may have been the Body and Blood of God and the elixir of life, but from his canons, we have seen that some Christians also viewed it as something which could be worn around the neck or in a phylactery in order to keep sickness at bay. These two understandings of the Eucharist are of course not mutually exclusive and the latter is no doubt in some sense derivative of the former. What we see, however, in the canons of Jacob or in the condemnations of theological and ecclesiastical elites are attempts at

[941] My thinking here has been influenced by A.P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London/New York, 1985).

regulating such projections when they violated the logic of the theological framework worked out by elites to hold the entire system of symbols and rituals together.

For each of these symbols or rituals, theological elites had developed a correct interpretation, or perhaps a small spectrum of acceptable interpretations; this was orthodoxy. But what the evidence I have attempted to present in this chapter and also throughout the second section of this dissertation makes clear is that many Christians, both lay and clergy, both 'simple' and elite, consistently engaged in behaviors that placed their interpretations of these symbols and rituals outside the range held to be acceptable by theological leaders. Some elites were aware of this and apparently nonplussed—recall that the Patriarch Julian, when confronted by Jacob of Edessa about rampant violations of church canons, told his bishop to go along with the times. Jacob, for his part, was not so sanguine about such violations. And of course, theological elites differed among themselves as to which interpretations were correct—hence the more familiar spectrum of different Christological positions, each with a different answer to the question of the number of natures or wills in the Incarnate Christ.

But these well-elaborated views were only the highly-sophisticated tip of a much larger iceberg. Jacob, George, and the rest of the Christian authors whose names have littered the pages of this dissertation were living in a world full of Christian heretics, not just in rival churches, but in their own churches as well. As Robinson points out, the *shahārija* do not seem to have had an independent set of ecclesiastical institutions, but rather functioned within the existing structures of the Church of the East; in terms of Christian praxis, they were indistinguishable from other East

Syrians.[942] Similarly, the extensive canonical abuses reflected in Jacob's canons were carried out by individuals and priests who belonged to Jacob's church and not to a rival one.

If we assume that what actually united Christians—lay and clergy, rich and poor, common and elite, rural and urban—in the seventh and eighth centuries was a common adherence to a shared set of symbols and rituals and not necessarily a shared set of doctrinal propositions about the precise theological plumbing related to those symbols and rituals, several interesting implications result. The first relates to the Qur'ān itself. Scholars have scoured heresiological treatises, apocryphal Gospels, and all manner of patristic writings looking for some group or text which corresponds to this or that strange-looking Christian doctrine mentioned in the Qur'ān. Exotic heretical groups like the Elkasites and the Collyridians, whose only actual existence *qua* community may or may not have been solely in the head of a figure like Epiphanios, are roused from their sleepy, musty existence on a brittle, yellowed page in a volume of Migne and pushed blinking out into the sunlight to sit next to Qur'ānic quotations in books on the origins of Islam or the sources of the Qur'ān and made to endure the scholarly 'might haves,' 'could haves,' 'possibly's' and 'perhaps's' which are the thing of paternity tests when there is no possibility of using DNA.[943] Rather than looking for fourth- or fifth-century groups which held low Christologies or exalted views of Mary—groups which may or may not have actually existed as actual, distinct communities of Christians—or

[942] See Robinson, *Empire and Elites*, p. 102.

[943] See for example Neal Robinson's discussion of 'sectarian' Christian influences on the presentation of Jesus in the Quran, where he invokes Nestorianism, Monophysitism, Tritheism, Antideco-Marcianites, Ebionites, Elkasites, Manichaeism, Gnosticism Judaism in trying to makes sense of the Quranic evidence. *Christ in Islam and Christianity* (Albany, 1991), pp. 19-21. See, too, the comments of G.S. Reynolds, 'The Muslim Jesus: Dead or Alive?', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 72 (2009), pp. 252-253.

seeking to find individual passages in Syriac texts written by theological elites in Northern Mesopotamia or Greek writers somewhere in the Mediterranean world which seem to bear resemblance to this or that idea put forth in the Qur'ān, a more fruitful way of understanding the image of Christianity presented therein is to see it as a reflection and reaction to Christianity as it existed on the ground in the seventh-century Ḥijāz. Such a Christianity need not have descended directly from past and perhaps fanciful heretical groups originating centuries before and hundreds of miles away, but instead was perhaps not all that dissimilar from the heretical Christianity which was ubiquitous all throughout the rest of the Middle East, differing from it only perhaps in degree as a result of its distance from theological elites like Jacob who were constantly engaged in boundary maintenance and orthodox theological instruction. So, for example, when the Qur'ān seems to suggest that Christians understood Mary to be part of the Trinity (5:116), it may be the case that it simply has misunderstood Christianity, or that it is channeling some sort of Nestorian intra-Christian polemic and making it its own. Alternatively, it may just be the case that the Qur'ān is reflecting an understanding of the Trinity among at least some Christian groups in western Arabia whose distance from important centers of theological activity and instruction had created an environment where such a non-standard view might take root and grow. Claude Gilliot has shown that all of the Christian and Jewish 'informants' of Muḥammad which the Muslim tradition itself identifies were foreigners from humble backgrounds—slaves or freed slaves—who knew how to read, and sometimes were even said to be reading either the Torah or the Gospel or both.[944] If any of these informants

[944] See C. Gilliot, 'Les «informateurs» juifs et chrétiens de Muḥammad. Reprise d'un problem traité par Aloys Sprenger et Theodor Nöldeke,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 22 (1998), p. 119. Also

actually existed and were not invented for the purpose of exegeting the Qur'ān, we should not be surprised if, so far as the Christians among them were concerned, their Christianity was more similar to that of the people Jacob of Edessa criticized than it was to that of Jacob himself.

The situation in western Arabia was no doubt not dissimilar to that further north: widespread and rampant 'heresy' among most people when it came to the great Trinitarian and Christological doctrines as well as understandings of things like the Eucharist. As I have suggested, this was perhaps even the case among parts of the clergy and church elite, such as they were in the Ḥijāz. George of the Arabs had explained Aphrahat's erroneous views on the soul in part by stating that he had nobody in his region to correct his reading of the Scripture; there do not seem to have been any Christian theological enforcers operating in the sixth and seventh-century Ḥijāz who could have performed the same function for Christians there at that time.

The second implication of assuming that heresy rather than orthodoxy was the natural and majority doctrinal position of most Christians in the seventh and eighth centuries brings us at last back to the question of the earliest encounters between Christians and Muslims in the seventh and eighth centuries. The Christians that Arab conquerors encountered in this period included highly-trained, theologically-sophisticated and erudite figures like the denizens of Qenneshre. But such figures were a very, very small minority.

The overwhelming majority of the Christians whom the Arab conquerors came into contact with were likely more similar to the people condemned in Jacob's canons

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see Gilliot's article, 'Informants,' in the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, which is essentially an English summary of this piece.

for their ‘pagan’ practices and abuses of the Eucharist than they were to someone like Jacob of Edessa. ‘Indeed, there was no distinction,’ the East Syrian John of Phenek would lament in perhaps the late 680s, ‘between pagan and Christian; Believer was not distinct from Jew and truth was not distinguished from that which leads astray.’[945] The shepherds and goat herders whom Simeon the Mountaineer had encountered and who had been too busy with their work to be able to receive proper Christian instruction were surely not the only Christians whose work, geographic location, and level of education left them with understandings of normative Christianity which were much less than those of the clever and dialectically slippery Christian interlocutors who star in Christian-Muslim dialogue and dispute texts and whose subtle ability to thrust and parry with a Muslim of similar education and sophistication is taken to be representative of what Islam meeting Christianity looked like in the first several centuries of Arab rule—yet such ‘simple Christians,’ to use Jacob’s phrase, formed the overwhelming majority of the Christian population. Formal, high-powered theological clashes between Muslims and Christians must have relatively rare when compared to a host of more simple encounters between ordinary adherents which took place daily.

One of the keys to understanding the process of Islamization and to answering the question, ‘What difference did Islam make?’, is to focus on this non-elite level of exchange. Numerically, the number of non-elite contacts between ordinary Christians and ordinary Muslims dwarfed the dealings between theological elites of both faiths. Moreover, it was the slow conversion of Christian farmers, blacksmiths, carpenters,

[945] My translation. For the Syriac text, see A. Mingana, *Sources Syriaques* vol. 1, (Mosul, 1908), p. 151*: ܠܝܬ ܗܘܐ ܓܝܪ ܦܘܪܫܢܐ ܒܝܬ ܚܢܦܐ ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢ ܗܘܐ ܡܫܬܚܠܦܐ ܡܢ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܦܪܫ ܗܘܐ ܫܪܪܐ ܡܢ ܡܛܥܝܢܐ

craftsmen, etc., person by person, family by family, over the course of decades and centuries that gradually turned Syria and the Middle East into a majority-Muslim society. The dramatic nature of this cumulative shift should not be underestimated, either: 'Most of the descendents,' Richard Bulliet has pointed out, 'of most of the men and women who, in the year 600 believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the son of God now profess a belief in Allah and in Muḥammad as his messenger.'[946]

The Christianity these people converted away from was not, I have attempted to suggest, the sort of theologically and doctrinally sophisticated faith that we encounter in texts written by theological elites. By the same token, the Islam they converted to was not the sophisticated Islam of ninth-century Baghdad. If Christian orthodoxy in the seventh century can be compared to a perfectly executed performance of a piece by Chopin (or Beethoven or Mozart, depending on the Christian group), then we can hardly say that Islamic orthodoxy even had a score in the seventh century. Indeed, it was in the seventh and eighth centuries that the score that was to become orthodoxy in Islam—both Sunnī and Shī'ī—was beginning to be written.

[946] R.W. Bulliet, 'Process and Status in Conversion and Continuity,' in M. Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi eds., *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries* (Toronto, 1990), p. 2.

Chapter 10: On Christians and Muslims, II: A Religion with a Thousand Faces

'In the first place, changes in things do not by any means always entail similar changes in their names.' Marc Bloch[947]

In my last chapter, I sought to nuance and broaden the ways we think about the import of the word 'Christian' when we are speaking about Christian and Muslim interactions in an early medieval context. 'Christian' might have included people who held to a wide variety of religious beliefs and it could cover people engaged in a number of different religious practices. Just as nobody today would take the *Church Dogmatics* of Karl Barth as representative of the faith and practice of the typical Presbyterian in the twentieth century, or the *Theological Investigations* of Karl Rahner as indicative of what the average Catholic believed and how he or she lived in the world, we should neither take the normative views of Christian elites in the seventh century and assume that they pointed to how people were actually behaving and what they were believing. Nearly all Christians and Muslims were non-elites; *ipso facto* nearly all Christian-Muslim interactions must have taken place on the non-elite level.

In this chapter, my goal will be to look at the other half of the equation in the phrase 'Christian-Muslim interaction.' My goal will be to explore the variety of meanings that 'Islam' and 'Muslim' may have held in the early period of Islamic history.

'Islam' as a Placeholder: Who converted and when?

We need not wade into the troubled and murky waters surrounding the reliability of Arabic literary sources for the first century or so of Islamic history[948] in

[947] See M. Bloch, *The Historian's Craft*, trans. P. Putnam (New York, 1953), p. 159.

[948] A very succinct summary of reasons for not fully trusting Islamic sources to reconstruct the religious history of this early period can be found in G. Hawting, *The Idea of Idolatry and the Emergence of Islam: From Polemic to History* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 7-10. The skeptical perspective about the reliability of Islamic historical sources is stated perhaps most powerfully in P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*

order to make the rather simple point that, just as was the case with Christianity, there was a spectrum of beliefs among Muslims in this period and that the meaning of Islam was just as person-relative, if not more, as the meaning of Christianity was. This of course stands to reason. The names of politico-religious elites and sectarian entrepreneurs can easily dominate our understanding of what Islam meant in its earliest stages, but we should not forget that an anonymous and silent majority formed the bulk of early adherents to Islam. And whatever the content of their belief in and understanding of Islam may have been, we should not be surprised if it was neither very profound nor resembled anything like that of the religious leaders of the community—a community that was, moreover, fractured and beset with dispute, civil wars and assassinations from a very early period. As Nehemia Levtzion has pointed out, 'The majority of the Arab tribesmen accepted Islam collectively, in what might be described as a passive adhesion to Islam.'[949]

This is a point worth pondering for a moment: what must have been the overwhelming majority of Muslim Arabs converted to Islam in groups, with their tribes, and not individually in the dramatic and intensely personal way that the *sīra* literature recounts of those who converted before the emigration to Medina. Such individual conversions based on the beauty of the Qur'ān or the nobility of Muḥammad's behavior were the exception, not the rule, and should not be paradigmatic in our understanding of what conversion looked like or meant. In the period before the *hijra*, the number of

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(Princeton, 1987), pp. 203-230. Also see *idem*., *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 3-17; *idem*., 'Serjeant and Meccan Trade,' *Arabica* 39 (1992) pp. 216-240; and *idem*., *Roman, Provincial and Islamic Law: The origins of the Islamic Patronate* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 31-34.. F.E. Peters, 'The Quest of the Historical Muhammad,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 23 (1991), pp. 291-315, provides a good discussion of the various challenges confronting anyone seeking to reconstruct the life of Muḥammad.

[949] N. Levtzion, 'Toward a Comparative Study of Islamization,' in *idem*., ed., *Conversion to Islam* (New York, 1979), p. 20.

Muslims was miniscule when compared to the increase it would make in less than a decade. No more than 100 Muslims are supposed to have emigrated from Mecca to Medina in 622;[950] when Muḥammad returned in January 630 to finally conquer Mecca, by contrast, he led an army of some 10,000 men.[951]

After the move of the young community of believers to Medina in 622, Muḥammad engaged in a prolonged conflict with the pagan Qurashīs of Mecca which culminated in the Muslim capture of Mecca in AD 630. One result of the conquest of Mecca was what is known as the 'Year of the Deputations': AD 630/AH 9 witnessed a number of delegations sent to Muḥammad from Arab tribes who submitted to Islam. The entry of these tribes into Islam was not portrayed by Ibn Isḥāq as having been done for what might be considered moral or religious factors. Their decision to become Muslims was a political choice and represented an act of allegiance and declaration of loyalty to Muḥammad as opposed to the Quraysh of Mecca. And this was an announcement of fealty only made once Muḥammad's mastery over the Quraysh had been definitively settled. 'In deciding their attitude to Islam,' Ibn Isḥāq wrote, 'the Arabs were only waiting to see what happened to this clan of Quraysh and the apostle,'

> For Quraysh were the leaders and guides of men, the people of the sacred temple, and the pure stock of Ishmael son of Abraham; and the leading Arabs did not contest this. It was Quraysh who had declared war on the apostle and opposed him; and when Mecca was occupied and Quraysh became subject to him and he subdued it to Islam, and the Arabs knew that they could not fight the apostle or display enmity towards him they entered into God's religion "in batches" as God said, coming to him from all directions.[952]

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[950] See W.M. Watt's article, '*Hidjra*' in EI^2, where Watt puts the number of emigrants—not counting Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, 'Alī and their wives—at about seventy.

[951] See A. Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (London, 1955), p. 545.

[952] Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad*, pp. 627-628.

The deputations came from a number of tribes and Arab groups: Banū Tamīm, Banū Sa'd b. Bakr, 'Abdu' 'l-Qays, Banū Ḥanīfa, Ṭayy', Banū Zubayd, Kinda, the Kings of Ḥimyar, among others.[953]

The group conversions of these tribes to Islam, it is important to remember, came only a few years before the beginnings of the Arab conquests further north. Before those conquests could begin in earnest, however, Muḥammad's death intervened in AD 632/AH 11, and the death of the Muslim community's Prophet set off a period of conflict which has come to be known as the *ḥurūb al-ridda*, or 'Wars of Apostasy.' Tribes, most of whom had ostensibly converted to Islam, rebelled against the authority of the state which Muḥammad had set up in Medina. The rebellion of some tribes seems to have been political and not to have entailed a rejection of Islam. But this was not the case across the board: some rebellions had a religious aspect as well. 'When (al-Jārūd) came to his people, he invited them to Islām,' al-Ṭabarī reports,

> Whereupon they all responded to him. Then it was only a short time before the Prophet died and they apostatized; 'Abd al-Qays said, "If Muḥammad had been a prophet, he would not have died," and they apostatized.[954]

The 'Abd al-Qays eventually resubmitted to Islam, but their rapid conversion, apostasy and re-conversion indicates their understanding of the nature and meaning of Islam was probably much different from that of older converts in Medina and radically different from that of 'Abbasid religious savants.

At this time, a number of prophets appeared, apparently having drawn inspiration from the model of Muḥammad. In the Najd Ṭalḥa b. Khālid claimed to be the prophet of the Banī Asad; in al-Yamāma, Maslama b. Ḥabīb claimed to be the

[953] See Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad*, pp. 628-644.

[954] See F. Donner, trans., *The Conquest of Arabia*, vol. 10, *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany, 1993), p. 135.

prophet of the Banī Ḥanīfa; also in the Najd, a woman named Sajāḥ had a following as a prophetess among the Banī Tamīm and Banī Taghlib; in Yemen, Abhala al-ʻAnsī was a prophet among the Banī ʻAns; in ʻUmān, Dhū al-Tāj Laqīṭ b. Mālik claimed to be prophet among the Azd.[955] The appearance of so many prophets in the Arabian peninsula at roughly the same time as Muḥammad raises the question of which particular characteristics of seventh-century Arabia made it such fecund terrain for the sprouting of prophetic claims. Their emergence and the seeming ease and speed with which tribes all over the Arabian peninsula moved away from Islam to following a different religion, despite their previous group conversion to Islam, suggests that the knowledge of Islam for these tribe members—as well as for the members of tribes elsewhere in the Arabian peninsula who, while continuing as Muslims, attempted a political rebellion against Medina—was perhaps not all that much better than the knowledge of Simeon the Mountaineer's shepherds' knowledge of Christianity.[956]

In other words, just as we should keep in mind the broad variety of meanings that Christianity must have had for the Christians of the seventh and eighth centuries when we think about Muslim-Christian contact in that period, we should also be aware of the fact that the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the seventh century were people who had converted to Islam, often in groups and not individually, after Muḥammad's emigration to Medina and his military successes there.

Once elected Caliph after Muḥammad's death, Abū Bakr relied heavily on a Meccan aristocracy which had until only recently been at war with the Muslim

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955 For all this, see F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 86-86 and the article by M. Lecker, '*al-Ridda*', in EI^2.

956 T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Muslim Faith*, 2nd ed, (repr. New Delhi, n.d.), p. 41, also used the *Ridda* Wars to suggest that the conversion of many Arabs in the seventh century to Islam was a superficial one.

community and which was comprised of recent converts; as Elias Shoufani put it, ‘the newly-converted Meccan aristocracy were the back-bone of Abū Bakr’s group of supporters.’[957] Khālid b. al-Walīd, who played an important role in suppressing the rebellions which broke out in Arabia after Muḥammad’s death and who was a significant player in the early Muslim conquests—he is supposed to have started the Muslim invasion of Iraq—had in fact been the leader of Meccan military forces against the Muslims and did not convert to Islam until 6 AH/AD 627 or 8 AH/AD 629.[958] Similarly, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, the conqueror of Palestine and Egypt and founder of Fusṭāṭ converted to Islam in 8 AH/AD 629-630. ‘Amr’s career and shrewd navigation of the conflicts, battles and disputes which characterized the Rāshidūn period showed him to be quite politically savvy; believing that his conversion to Islam on the eve of Muḥammad’s conquest of Mecca was perhaps motivated by factors other than sincere religious conviction would not be an act of uncharitable and willful historical speculation.[959] Ibn Abī Sarḥ, the scribe who is supposed to have apostatized from Islam when he saw that he could change the text of the Qur’ān without seeming to upset Muḥammad was granted amnesty by Muḥammad at the time of the conquest of Mecca and eventually was made governor of Egypt after ‘Amr b. al-Āṣ.[960] Abū Sufyān, one of the leaders of the Meccan opposition to Muḥammad, only converted to Islam at the time of Muḥammad’s conquest of Medina. Within a few years, he would be named the

[957] See E. Shoufani, *Al-Riddah and the Muslim Conquest of Arabia* (Toronto, 1973), p. 61.

[958] See Shoufani, *Al-Riddah*, p. 61 and P. Crone’s article, ‘Khālid b. al-Walīd b. al-mughīra al-makhzūmī,’ in *EI*².

[959] See Shoufani, *Al-Riddah*, p. 61 and A.J. Wensinck’s article ‘‘Amr b. al-Āṣ (al-Āṣī) al-Shamī,’ in *EI*².

[960] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.2 (Leiden, 1918), pp. 190-191. For an ET, see Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), pp. 307-308.

Muslim governor of Najran and possibly also the Hijaz.[961] His sons Yazīd and Mu‘āwiya also only converted to Islam at the conquest of Mecca; Yazīd would play an important role in the Muslim conquest of Palestine and would be appointed governor of Syria before his death in 18 AH/AD 639 and Mu‘āwiya would go on to become the fifth Caliph and a seminal figure in Islamic history.[962] What we are dealing with here is a number of different Sauls of Tarsus, but rather than a dramatic and intensely personal spiritual experience explaining their conversion, we have the threat and fear which accompanied an imminent military conquest by a rival and enemy. A conversion on the road to Damascus differed from a conversion which occurred while Muḥammad was on the road to Mecca accompanied by a large army.

To be sure, genuine religious conviction may have played a role in at least some conversions, but other factors—e.g., political allegiance and sheer expediency—seem to have been prominent in the conversion of many to Islam. Once Muḥammad and the Muslim community of Medina had gained hegemony in the Arabian peninsula, the religious incentive structure there was altered. We should not assume that for many Arab followers of Islam in the seventh century, and perhaps for their descendants as well, Islam translated into a well-articulated (or even poorly articulated) set of beliefs.

Muslims becoming...Muslim

We should not be surprised, therefore, to find reports from the first century that Basrans did not know about the religious duty of fast alms, or that they had no idea about how to perform prayer and had to be shown, or that the people of Syria did not know that the number of obligatory prayers was five, or that the only person the tribe

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[961] See W.M. Watt's article, 'Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb b. Umayya,' in *EI*^{2} and Shoufani, *Al-Riddah*, p. 62.

[962] See Shoufani, *Al-Riddah*, p. 62 and C.E. Bosworth's article 'Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān b. Ḥarb b. Umayya' and M. Hind's article, 'Mu‘āwiya I b. Abī Sufyān,' in *EI*^{2}.

of ‘Abd al-Ashhal could find to lead their prayers was a slave. Or, that people were reciting Arabic poetry from the pulpits of mosques, mistakenly thinking they were reciting verses from the Qur’ān. Or, that in the time of al-Hajjāj and ‘Umar II (d. 101 AH/AD 720), people were said not to know when prayer times were.[963] Salima al-Jarmī led the prayers for his tribe at the age of six because they could find nobody who knew more Qur’ān than he did.[964] ‘Umar II wrote to his governors alarmed at reports that women were going out upon the death of somebody and showing their hair and wailing, ‘like the action of the people of the Jahiliyya’ and ordered them to crack down hard on this practice.[965]

We have seen that Christians were engaging in a variety of prognosticatory, divinatory and magical practices which made Jacob none too happy. Unsurprisingly, early Muslims seem to have been doing similar things. Jabala b. al-Azraq reported that the Prophet himself was once stung by a scorpion while praying, ‘and so the people used a charm on him (*raqāhu al-nās*). When he recovered, he said, “God healed me, not your spell.”’[966] Promises of special privileges in the afterlife for Muslims who did not engage in magical or divinatory practices might also be taken as suggestive of just these things being widespread among adherents of the new religion. ‘My Lord promised me that he would cause seventy thousand people from my community to enter into paradise without reckoning,’ Muḥammad is supposed to have stated, according to Ibn

[963] I have taken all these examples from I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, vol.2, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (London, 1971), pp. 39-40.
[964] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1, (Leiden, 1915), pp. 63-64; with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), p. 54.
[965] See Muḥammad b. Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, (Cairo, 2001), p. 381 (also, idem., *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (Leiden, 1322), p. 290). With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), pp. 245-246.
[966] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 146. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Medina*, vol. 1, p. 267.

Sa'd. 'It was said to him, "Who are those?" He said, 'They are the ones who do not seek to use charms and who do not do evil auguries and who are not cauterized by burning irons, but who rely upon their Lord.'[967] When Muṭarrif b. 'Abd Allāh (d. 87 AH/AD 705) had a problem with urine retention, he had his son summoned. The son recited a verse from the Qur'ān to him and brought him a physician. 'My son,' Muṭarrif asked, '"What is this?' 'A doctor,' he replied. 'I forbid you,' Muṭarrif replied, 'to make me carry a charm or to hang beads upon me.'[968] And of course when Muslims came into the Fertile Crescent, they found themselves surrounded by local practices of divination which were also a cause of anxiety. 'A letter from 'Umar came to us,' Bajāla b. 'Abada reported, '[saying] "Kill every enchanter and enchantress." His letter,' Bajāla continued, 'was concerning the Magians.'[969]

Perhaps as a reflection of the depth of the conversion of many Muslims, we read that 'Umar I sent 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ghanm b. Sa'd al-Ash'arī to Syria to give people religious instruction (*yufaqqihu 'l-nās*).[970] In Syria, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ghanm had been an acquaintance, Ibn Sa'd tells us, of Mu'ādh b. Jabal; years before, Mu'ādh, for his part, had been sent by Muḥammad to Yemen as an administrator and a teacher (*'āmilan wa-mu'alliman*).[971] In addition to sending 'Abd al-Raḥmān to Syria for what amounted to

[967] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1, (Leiden, 1915), p. 52. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Medina*, vol. 1, p. 44.

[968] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1, (Leiden, 1915), pp. 105-106, quote on p. 106. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Medina*, vol. 1, p. 93, though in disagreement with her rendering: 'I forbid you to burden me with a charm or puncture me.' *Uhrij 'alayka an tuḥmilanī 'alā ruqyatan wa-tu'alliqa 'alayya kharazatan*.

[969] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1, (Leiden, 1915), p. 94. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Medina*, vol. 1, p. 81.

[970] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 152. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Medina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), p. 273.

[971] See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 2, p. 114. With reference to ET in Bewley, trans., *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, p. 239. For the connection between 'Abd al-Raḥmān and Mu'ādh, see Ibn Sa'd, vol. 7, pt. 2, p. 152. With reference to ET in Bewley, trans., *The Men of Medina*, (London, 1997), p. 273.

catechetical purposes, ‘Umar also sent ten people to Basra to give the people there religious instruction (*yufaqqihūna ’l-nās*).[972] And Syria and Basra were not alone: ‘Umar also sent ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd to Kufa to be in charge of the treasury there—but also to teach the Kufans the Qur’ān and give them religious instruction (*yufaqqihahum*).[973] ‘Learn (*fa-tafaqqahū*) the *sunna*,’ ‘Umar wrote Abū Mūsā, ‘and study (*tafaqqahū*) Arabic!’[974] In another place, we read that Ibn Mas‘ūd is said to have killed the imam Ibn al-Nawwāḥa for reciting a text in a mosque which was not part of Muḥammad’s revelation; there were a number of others complicit in Ibn al-Nawwāḥa’s recitation, but rather than have them killed, Ibn Mas‘ūd had them sent to Syria where, he said, God would either grant them repentance or they would be wiped out by the plague.[975]

‘Umar sent out religious experts to catechize Muslims because he was no doubt keenly aware of the thin levels of religious knowledge that existed among many in the young religious community. According to al-Azdī, when ‘Umar was returning to Madina from Syria, he stopped at a watering point of the tribe Judhām where he was told about a man who had two sisters and had the man brought to him. ‘Who are these two women you have?’, ‘Umar asked. “My two wives,’ the man responded. ‘What is their relationship,’ ‘Umar wanted to know. When the man told the Caliph that they were sisters, his response was incredulity: ‘What is your religion? Aren’t you a Muslim?’ ‘Of course,’ the man responded. ‘Haven’t you learned that this is forbidden

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[972] See Jamāl al-Dīn Abī al-Hajjāj Yusūf al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl*, vol. 26, (Beirut, 1992), p. 174 (report of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī about ‘Abd Allāh b. Mughaffal). cf. W.B. Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 31.

[973] ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Mas‘ūdī, *Les prairies d’or*, C. Barbier de Meynard ed. and trans., vol. 4 (Paris, 1865), p. 256. cf. T.W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 2nd ed., (London, 1913, repr. New Delhi, n.d.), p. 51.

[974] Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 8, (Riyadh, 2004), p. 433 (no. 26043)

[975] Abū Bakr ‘Abd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 169.

for you!?,' 'Umar answered back, citing Q 4:33 which forbade such marriages. 'No,' the man told 'Umar, 'I haven't learned that, and it isn't forbidden for me.'

Another story connected to 'Umar's return to Madina from Syria has him meet an old man who has agreed to share his wife with a younger man—every other day—in exchange for the younger man's pasturing and watering his animals. 'Umar had the men brought to him. 'What is your religion,' the Caliph asked. 'Muslims,' they replied. 'What is this that has reached me concerning you,' 'Umar asked again. The men did not know what he was talking about; when he told them about the issue of their shared wife, they did not deny it. 'Did you not know,' 'Umar asked, 'that in the Islamic religion this is forbidden and that it is not appropriate?' 'No, by God,' they answered, 'we didn't know.'[976] Here we have two incidents which are quite similar to Simeon the Mountaineer's encounter with the uneducated Christian shepherds in the mountains. They were Christians but knew very little about normative Christianity.

I will discuss in more detail below reports of people reverting to their former religions after becoming Muslims, but for now, we might also point to reports of people converting to Islam and then subsequently returning to polytheism as indicative of the depth of conversion among some parts of the Muslim community in the early period.[977]

Being Muslim does not seem to have necessarily translated into a solid body of propositional knowledge about the contents and implications of the new faith, such as they were. 'Urwa, we are told, wrote to 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz about a man who had converted to Islam and then apostatized. 'Umar responded by prescribing a sort of

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[976] Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-shām* (Cairo, 1970), pp. 264-266. For this point, see N. Khalek, *From Byzantium to Early Islam. Studies on Damascus in the Umayyad Era* (PhD Diss., Princeton, 2006), p. 172.

[977] For examples of such reports, see, 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 164 (no. 18693) and pp. 165-166 (no. 18696).

religious examination. ‘Ask him,’ ‘Umar II wrote to ‘Urwa, ‘about the religious precepts of Islam (*sharā’i‘ al-Islām*). If he already knows them, then offer Islam to him—and if he refuses, sever his neck.’ Offering apostates a chance to return to Islam, as we will see below, was a standard practice. Interesting for us here, however, is the second part of ‘Umar’s response: ‘If he does not know them [i.e., the precepts],’ he went on, ‘then impose the poll-tax on him harshly and leave him be.’[978] What we have in ‘Umar’s second option is an acknowledgement that there were people who were calling themselves Muslims who did not know what Islam was; they were Muslims in name only—just like Simeon’s shepherds.

And we have other pieces of evidence for uneven and thin levels of knowledge of the particulars of Islam among early Muslims. Though the Qur’ān explicitly ordered cutting off the hands of thieves (5:38) (a view reiterated by later Islamic law), for instance, in the first half of the eighth century (A.D.) John of Damascus would report that Muslims punished thieves with flogging.[979] The Qur’ān expressed an increasingly negative attitude towards wine, one which culminated in its proscription (2:216, 4:46, 5:92),[980] yet the consumption of alcohol seems to have been widespread among early Muslims. Even being an associate of Muḥammad did not seem to have necessarily had an effect in this area: Waḥshī b. Ḥarb al-Ḥabashī was a companion of Muḥammad who helped kill the upstart prophet Musaylima during the Wars of Apostasy; he was also reputed to be the first person to be beaten for drinking wine in Ḥimṣ.[981] ‘It was mentioned to me that ‘Abd Allāh and his companions were drinking a drink in Syria,’

[978] ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 171.
[979] See J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford, 1964), p. 18.
[980] See the article ‘Khamr’ by A.J. Wensinck in *EI*^{2}.
[981] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* , vol. 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), pp. 136-137. ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), pp. 259-260.

‘Umar is reported to have said, ‘so I ask about it. If it is intoxicating, I will have them whipped.’[982] This was not an isolated incident on ‘Umar’s part, either. ‘‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb burned down the house of Ruwayshid al-Thaqafī,’ Ibrāhīm b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān reported, ‘it was an inn (*ḥanūtan*) for drinking and ‘Umar had forbiden that. I saw it blazing like a coal.’[983] ‘Umar’s measures led Rabī‘a b. Umayya b. Khalaf, someone who particularly liked drinking (*ṣāḥib sharāb*), to emigrate to Byzantine territory and apostatize from Islam.[984] When the people of Medina expelled the Umayyads from their city in AH 63 (AD 682), they proclaimed the vice of Caliph Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya and gave their allegiance to ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥanẓala. ‘O people, fear God alone—He has no partner!’ Abū ‘Abd Allāh is reported to have said, ‘By God, we did not go out against Yazīd until we feared that we would be stoned from heaven: a man marries mothers and daughters and sisters and drinks wine and forsakes prayer.’[985] A letter from ‘Umar II to his provinces indicates that some people during his reign were citing the precedent of ‘Umar I (d. 23 AH/AD 644) to justify drinking an alcoholic beverage called *ṭilā’*;[986] ‘Umar II would write another letter forbidding the drinking of wine and prescribing punishments for those who were doing it to the Governor of Egypt, Ayyūb b. Shuraḥbīl, and the Muslims there.[987] And it was not just Egypt that got special treatment:

[982] See Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf* , vol. 8 (Riyad, 2004), p. 81 (no. 24106).

[983] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* , vol. 5 (Leiden, 1905), p. 40. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina* (London, 2000), p. 36.

[984] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 3.1 (Leiden, 1904), p. 202. For this point, see H. Lammens, ‘Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Mo‘awiya I[er],’ *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 275.

[985] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* , vol. 5 (Leiden, 1905), p. 47. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina* (London, 2000), p. 42.

[986] See a letter by ‘Umar II written to the provinces and preserved in Abū Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz* (Damascus, 1964), p. 97. On ‘Umar I and *ṭilā’*, see also Wensinck’s article ‘Khamr’ in *EI*[2].

[987] See Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz*, pp. 99-103.

according to Ibn Sa‘d, ‘Umar II forbade *ṭilā’* everywhere.[988] At Khunāṣira (near Aleppo), ‘Umar II ordered that wineskins be cut open and wine bottles be broken.[989] Indeed, Khunāṣira seems to have been a hotbed of intoxication: ‘Abd al-Majīd b. Suhayl reported coming there and finding a house known for wine and open revelry. He reported it to the commander of ‘Umar II’s local law enforcement (*ṣāḥib shurṭat ‘Umar*) and was told that ‘Umar had been made aware of the situation. ‘In the case of the one who is hidden by houses,’ ‘Umar is reported to have told the man, ‘leave him alone.’[990] ‘Umar II beat one man 80 times as a *ḥadd* punishment for wine;[991] he had another man who had drunk wine in the land of the enemy whipped 80 times.[992] ‘Umar II also ordered that *dhimmī*s not bring wine into the garrison cities of Muslims and so, it is reported, they did not;[993] such a command, of course, suggests that *dhimmī*s had been doing precisely this until they were stopped. Another report suggest that ‘Umar II would take severe measures to try to stop the consumption of alcohol: a group of people was drinking, Yaḥyā b. Sa‘īd related, and one of them got drunk, so ‘Umar had all of them scourged.[994] ‘Umar’s attitude towards alcohol, however, does not seem to

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[988] See Muḥammad b. Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, (Cairo, 2001), p. 342. With reference to ET in A. Bewley, trans. *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2 (London, 2000), p. 216.

[989] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 356. With reference to ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 227.

[990] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 356. With reference to ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 227.

[991] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pp. 356-357. With reference to ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 227.

[992] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 347. With reference to ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 220.

[993] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 356. With reference to ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 227.

[994] Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 8, p. 83 (no. 24118).

have been universally negative: *nabīdh*, he is reported to have said, was *ḥalāl*, but ordered that people should drink it from leather flasks.[995]

I have cited a number of instances involving wine and Muslims from ʻUmar II's caliphate, but his reign is only an example—a useful one, because his pious reputation and outlook helps bring to the forefront activities which must have been going on before and after his period without raising official ire. For there seems to have been a variety of attitudes towards the consumption of alcohol in the first several centuries after the Arab conquests.[996] ʻAlī b. al-Ḥusayn (d. 94 AH/ AD 712), the great-grandson of Muḥammad, is said to have made wine (*yunbidhu*) without dregs in a large leather flask during the two ʻ*īd*s.[997] And even Shurayḥ b. al-Ḥārith (d. ca. 80 AH /AD 700), an iconic early *qāḍī*, is said to have been a drinker of a strong form of the alcoholic *ṭilā'*.[998] 'If a *qāḍī* such as Shurayḥ was publicly involved in practices so flagrantly contradictory to the Quranic letter and spirit,' Wael Hallaq has written, 'then one can safely assume that, apart from certain highly regulated areas in the Quran (marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc.), there was little concern at that time for an Islamic system of legal morality.'[999] And, it should be pointed out, Shurayḥ was a figure to whom other early *qāḍī*s would turn for advice. 'I have been installed as a judge,' Hishām b. Hubayra al-Ḍabbī wrote to Shurayḥ, 'despite my youth and the paucity of my knowledge in much relating to it and

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[995] Ibn Saʻd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 365. With reference to ET Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 233.

[996] See the lucid discussion in I. Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, trans. A. and R. Hamori, (Princeton, 1981), pp. 59-63.

[997] Ibn Saʻd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 5, p. 161. With reference to ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, pp. 140-141.

[998] See Muḥammad b. Khalaf b. Ḥayyān Wakīʻ, *Akhbār quḍāt* (Beirut, 2001), p. 372. There are conflicting reports of the date of Shurayḥ's death, for this and further information on Shurayḥ, see E. Kohlberg's article, 'Shurayḥ b. al-Ḥārith (or b. Shuraḥbīl) b. Ḳays, Abū Umayya al-Kindī,' in *EI*^{2}.

[999] Hallaq, *The Origins and Evolution of Islamic Law*, p. 40.

I cannot do without consulting someone like you.'[1000] Such widespread flaunting of explicit Qur'ānic injunctions, even among elites charged with enforcing them who should presumably have known better, is precisely what we should expect if the overwhelming majority of early conversions to Islam were of a group-nature and motivated by a variety of factors, many of them not necessarily inner spiritual conviction.

'Islam' and Muslim elites

Whatever the precise beliefs as to what Islam meant in its earliest phases were,[1001] we have evidence that, even for theological elites—those people who presumably converted for reasons which may have directly related to spiritual or religious matters—they were varied and changing. Strictly by taking the *sīra* literature uncritically and at face value, we can see change in understandings of what precisely Islam meant in the life of Muḥammad himself. In his biography of Muḥammad, Ibn Isḥāq reported the so-called incident of the 'Satanic Verses' in which Muḥammad effected a *rapprochement* between the polytheistic Meccans and Muslims through the recitation of Qur'ānic passages which gave honor to three popular local deities, al-Lāt, al-'Uzzā and Manāt, and granted legitimacy to seeking them as intercessors. In the story as it is told, Muḥammad did not realize there was something wrong with these statements; he thought they were sent from God until the angel Gabriel intervened, confronting and correcting Muḥammad and telling him that Satan had cast these statements into his mouth. What is important to point out is that there was some

[1000] See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7 (Leiden, 1915), pp. 109-110. With reference to ET in Muhammad ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), p. 96.

[1001] See Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 546-550, for a discussion of the early evidence we possess as to what the practice and beliefs of Islam in the first century of the *hijra* may have been.

period of time between Muḥammad's first recitation of the verses and his recognition of them as Satanic in origin and subsequent abrogation.[1002] That Muḥammad did not realize immediately that giving honor to these polytheist deities was problematic has been taken to suggest that at this point in his prophetic career, he was not yet a monotheist, but was rather a henotheist.[1003] The uncompromising monotheism of Islam still lay in the future: the meaning of Islam was evolving even for Muḥammad.

The incident of the Satanic Verses was recorded by Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150/767), the most important of Muḥammad's early biographers, but it was omitted in Ibn Hishām's (d. 215/830) recension of Ibn Isḥāq's work. Similarly, Ibn Hishām omitted Ibn Isḥāq's account of Muḥammad's belief that he may have been a poet or demon-possessed and consequent plan to kill himself after the shock of receiving his first revelation.[1004] Both of these stories in the Prophet's biography were viewed by at least some later Muslims as cause for embarrassment or concern. Similarly, Kister has shown that an early report which showed Muḥammad slaughtering meat for idols and eating it in the time of the *jāhiliyya* did not jibe with later sensibilities and was either explained away or

[1002] cf. W.M. Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca* (Oxford, 1953), p. 103: 'at some later time Muḥammad announced that these verses were not really part of the Qur'ān and should be replaced by others of a vastly different import. The earliest versions do not specify how long afterwards this happened; the probability is that it was weeks or even months.'

[1003] For Muḥammad as a henotheist, see M. Rodinson, *Mohammed*, trans. A. Carter (New York, 1971), pp. 96-97, 106-107. Also see W. Montgomery Watt's discussion of this incident and whether it shows that Muḥammad was a species of polytheist at this point in *idem*., *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesmen* (London, 1961), pp. 60-65. Also see *idem*., *Muhammad at Mecca*, p. 104 specifically and more generally, pp. 101-109. On the incident of the Satanic Verses in general, see M.S. Ahmed, *The Satanic Verses Incident in the Memory of the Early Muslim Community. An Analysis of the early* Riwāyahs *and their* Isnāds, (PhD diss., Princeton University, 1997). On pp. 264-265 Ahmed gives a general overview of the way in which different *riwāya*s of the Satanic verses incident handle the correction of Muḥammad's error. In four versions, there is no correction from Gabriel and Muḥammad apparently realizes that he has made a mistake independently from outside help.

[1004] For these incidents, (taken from al-Ṭabarī), see A. Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (London, 1955), pp. 106, 165-167. Also see the remarks of U. Rubin in his article 'Sīra and the Qur'ān,' in J.D. McAuliffe, ed., *The Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 5, (Boston-Leiden, 2006), p. 34 and see *idem*., *The Eye of the Beholder: The Life of Muḥammad as viewed by the early Muslims* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 113-114, 158-166.

rejected by the subsequent Muslim tradition.[1005] In this vein, we can also mention that in the first several centuries of Islamic history, the historicity of the incident of the Satanic Verses, or *qiṣṣat al-gharānīq*, 'Story of the Cranes,' as it was called in Arabic, was widely believed by Muslims; later, however, it came to be widely and strongly rejected by Muslim scholars. Shahab Ahmed has pointed to changing attitudes among Muslims towards the authenticity of reports of this incident as indicative of 'the distinctly fluid and mutable nature of the historical constitution of orthodoxy in Islam.'[1006]

In this early period, there was also a spectrum of attitudes towards the text of the Qur'ān itself. The idea that there might be scribal errors in the text of the Qur'ān itself was not held to be impossible or preposterous by some. When 'Urwah asked 'Ā'isha about three different passages in the Qur'ān which contain apparent grammatical errors (4:162, 5:69, 20:63), her response was frank: 'O son of my sister, this is the work of the scribes,' she said. 'They made errors in the Book.'[1007] Ibn 'Abbās read *tasta'dhinū* in 24:27 rather than *tasta'nisū*: 'it's only the error of the scribes,' he is reported to have said.[1008] Similarly, Sa'īd b. Jubayr is reported to have said that there are four passages in the Qur'ān which have grammatical errors (5:69, 4:162, 63:10, 20:63) and al-Zubayr b. 'Abd Allāh b. Abī Khālid is said to have asked Abān b. 'Uthmān about

[1005] See M.J. Kister, '"A Bag of Meat": A Study of an Early *Ḥadīth*,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 33 (197), pp. 267-275. Reprinted in *idem*., *Studies in Jāhiliyya and Early Islam* (London, 1980), no. VI.

[1006] See S. Ahmed, 'Ibn Taymiyyah and the Satanic verses,' *Studia Islamica* 87 (1998), pp. 67-124; quote at p. 122.

[1007] See Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmi' al-bayān 'ān ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 2001), vol. 7, pp. 680-681. Cf. I. Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators* trans. W.H. Behn (Weisbaden, 2006), p. 20. See also, J. Burton, 'Linguistic Errors in the Qur'ān,' *Journal of Semitic Studies* 33 (1988), pp. 181-196.

[1008] See al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*, vol. 17, p. 240. Cf. Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, p. 20.

the grammatical problem in 4:162.[1009] One report has Zayd b. Thābit consult ʻUthmān about the collection of the Qur'ān: initially, ʻUthmān refused and told Zayd, 'You are a people who makes errors in speech (*talḥanūn*),' but after Zayd asked him again, ʻUthmān agreed to be consulted.[1010] Another story suggests that the Caliph ʻUthmān was nonplussed about there being errors in the text of the Qur'ān. When the authoritative Qur'ānic codices which ʻUthmān had ordered produced were copied out and showed to him, al-Dānī (d. AH 444/AD 1053) reports, the Caliph found solecisms in them (*fa-wajada fīhā ḥurūfan min al-laḥn*). 'Leave them,' ʻUthmān is supposed to have said, 'for the Arabs will set them right and put them into proper Arabic with their tongue, since the appearance [of the text] points to an error in the consonantal skeleton (*al-rasm*).'[1011]

We have other indications of there being a flexible attitude towards the text of the Qur'ān among some groups in the earliest Islamic period. Islamic exegetical literature has preserved the story of the apostasy of one of Muḥammad's scribes, ʻAbd Allāh b. Saʻd b. Abī Sarḥ, which suggests that the attitude towards the fixedness of the text of the Qur'ān was, at least among some early Muslims, rather liberal. Dictating part of the Qur'ānic revelation to Ibn Abī Sarḥ, Muḥammad included the words '*ʻazīz, ḥakīm*' ('Mighty, Wise,'). Ibn Abī Sarḥ, however, changed the text and instead wrote

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[1009] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, pp. 33-34.

[1010] Abū Bakr ʻAbd Allāh b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Riyadh, 2004), p. 23.

[1011] See ʻUthmān b. Saʻīd al-Dānī, *al-Muqniʻ fī rasm maṣāḥif al-amṣār maʻ kitāb al-nuqaṭ* (Istanbul, 1932), p. 124. See a collection of similar reports in Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* (Cairo, 1936), pp. 32-33. Cf. also G. Bergsträβer and O. Pretzl, *Geschichte des Qorāns von Theodor Nöldeke*, vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1938), p. 2. NB: That al-Dānī rejects the authenticity of this report (*al-Muqniʻ*, p. 124) is not important. Regardless of whether ʻUthmān actually made this comment, its very composition and existence shows a diversity of Muslim attitudes towards the nature of the Quranic text. This principle holds true for all the various reports I cite here: their actual occurrence is less important than the sheer fact of their composition and existence as texts which shows that such stories formed part of what some Muslims understood to be sacred history.

down ‘*ghufūr, raḥīm*,’ (‘Forgiving, Merciful’). When Ibn Abī Sarḥ read the changed passage back to Muḥammad, the Prophet’s response was, ‘Yes, it’s the same.’ The scribe’s reaction was to abandon Islam and return to the Quraysh in Mecca, who were at the time still Muḥammad’s polytheist opponents. ‘“‘*Azīz, ḥakīm*,” had come down to him,’ Ibn Abī Sarḥ is supposed to have told the Meccans, ‘and so I changed it and then told him what I had written, and he said, “Yes, it’s the same.”’[1012] Elsewhere, Ibn Abī Sarḥ is reported to have made the statement, ‘Muḥammad would only write what I wanted.’[1013] Another report combines these two elements but does not explicitly mention Ibn Abī Sarḥ. The unnamed scribe in this version wrote *samīʿan ʿalīman* (‘Hearing, Knowing’) rather than *samīʿan baṣīran* (‘Hearing, the Seeing’) and *samīʿan baṣīran* rather than *samīʿan ʿalīman*; he later converted to Christianity in disillusionment rather than going back to paganism as Ibn Abī Sarḥ is supposed to have done. Nevertheless, his complaint was the same: ‘I would only write what I wanted with Muḥammad.’[1014]

Regardless of whether these incidents actually occurred, the fact that they were recorded reflects an attitude of fluidity towards the text of the Qur’ān which existed in the earliest period of Islam. I will not go into the history of the text of the Qur’ān in depth in this chapter—I have collected information relating to this fascinating topic

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[1012] See Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿān ta’wīl āy al-Qur‘ān* (Cairo, 2001), vol. 9, p. 405.

[1013] al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī: jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿān ta’wīl āy al-Qur‘ān* , vol. 11, p. 288.

[1014] See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif* (Cairo, 1936), p. 3. A statement of ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd seems to have been made in partial response to stories like these: ‘The error is not that a certain *sūra* enter into another one, nor is it that an verse end with ‘*ḥakīm ʿalīm*’ or ‘‘*alīm ḥakīm*’ or ‘*ghufūr raḥīm*.’ The error, rather, is that one puts in it what is not from it [sc. the Quran], or that one ends a verse of mercy with punishment, or a verse of punishment with a verse of mercy.’ See Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *Kitāb faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, (Damascus, 1995), p. 355.

and placed it in an appendix.[1015] A look at this history shows that the early Muslim community was unsure as to the exact nature of the contents of the Qur'ān, believed that significant portions, even entire *sūra*s of the Qur'ān had actually been lost or not recorded, and was unsure exactly how to vocalize the text of the Qur'ān, an uncertainty that could at times have a legal impact.

Focusing on some aspects of the history of the actual text of the Qur'ān does not stem from an interest in the picayune, a fetishizing of jots and tittles. The question of the actual contents of the Qur'ān, the nature of its words and, indeed, entire *sūra*s, is antecedent to any theological debates about its precise metaphysical nature, whether it was created or uncreated, or anything else. That something as important to Islam as the actual contents of Qur'ān itself, its very words, was contested and open to different and competing answers among elites in the first several centuries after the death of Muḥammad is symptomatic of something larger. If Muslim religious elites themselves had evolving and differing attitudes towards something as central as the Qur'ān, what are we to assume to have been the case among the non-elites, who must have formed the large majority of the Muslim community—and not just with respect to the Qur'ān, but with respect to a whole host of different things?

Even if we press the question of the religious elites' knowledge or possession of a strongly defined set of beliefs, we find that in this early period, we may be mistaken if we assume that it included too much. It has been, for example, forcefully argued that there was an important discontinuity between the time of the composition of the

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[1015] Along these same lines, see the evidence for lost portions of the Qur'ān collected in J. Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law: Islamic Theories of Abrogation* (Edinburgh, 1990), pp. 43-55.

Qur'ān and the time of the composition of commentaries on it.[1016] This is one obvious way of accounting for the presence in the Qur'ān of words whose precise meaning has eluded commentators, medieval and modern, as well as other enigmas, like the significance of the (on the face of it) meaningless Arabic letters which begin a number of different *sūra*s. The fact that Muslim scholars had to resort to speculation and conjecture to explain the meanings of words like *īlāf*, *kalāla*, or the 'mysterious letters' suggests that by the time Muslims started trying to exegete the meaning of the Qur'ān, vital details about its composition and original context had been lost or forgotten.[1017] In this vein, the Islamic tradition's many and conflicting attempts to identify the Ṣābi'ūn who, along with Christians, Jews and Magians, were regarded by the Qur'ān as People of the Book, might also be pointed out. 'It would seem almost incredible,' Arthur Jeffery wrote,

> that when the Qur'ān grants special privilege and protection to four communities as true believers, no exact tradition as to the identity of one of the communities should have survived till the time when the Traditionists and Exegetes began their work of compilation. … if so much uncertainty existed on so important a matter as the identity of a protected community, one can imagine how the case stands with regard to unimportant little details which are of profound interest to the philologist to-day, but which, in the early days of Islām, had no doctrinal or political significance to bring them prominently before the attention of the Muslim savants.[1018]

There seems to have been some sort of break in continuity between the event of the Qur'ān and later elite Muslim religious discourse. And we have evidence of this at more than just the level of forgotten meanings of words. Schacht, for example, pointed out

[1016] Perhaps the strongest such arguments can be found in P. Crone, 'Two Legal Problems Bearing on the Early History of the Qur'ān,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 18 (1994), pp. 1-37.

[1017] See Crone, *Meccan Trade*, pp. 203-210 and M. Cook, *The Koran* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 138-142.

[1018] See A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Baroda, 1938), p. 4. For a survey of exegetical attempts at identifying the Ṣābi'ūn, see, J.D. McAuliffe, 'Exegetical identification of the Ṣābi'ūn,' *The Muslim World* 72 (1982), pp. 95-106. See also, C. Buck, 'The Identity of the Ṣābi'ūn: An Historical Quest,' *The Muslim World* 74 (1984), pp. 172-186. And see F. de Blois' article, 'Sabians,' in the *Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 4 (Leiden/Boston, 2004), pp. 511-513.

that though the Qur'ān expressly accepts written testimony for contracts (2:282), later Islamic law would reject written documents and only accept witnesses.[1019] There are other important examples of Umayyad legal practice which contradicts Qur'ānic law as well.[1020]

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that it is in this space that the earliest Christian-Muslim interactions were taking place in the Near East.

[1019] Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, pp. 18-19.
[1020] See Crone, 'Two Legal Problems,' pp. 10-12.

Chapter 11: On Christians and Muslims, III: The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

I devoted Chapter 9 to trying to discuss the spectrum of Christian beliefs and behaviors in the early medieval period; in Chapter 10, I attempted to do the same for Muslim beliefs in the early 'Islamic' period. In this present chapter, I will try to bring these two ends together to see how understanding Christianity and Islam in this period to include the non-elite, non-normative level changes how we think about the nature of early Christian-Muslim interactions and how we construct an image of the religious landscape of the early medieval Middle East. More specifically, in the same way I have sought to put the words 'Christian' and 'Muslim' under the hot lamp of the interrogator, here, I will attempt to do the same with the idea of 'conversion' and will seek to nuance our understanding of its meanings, motivations and results. I will argue that the coming of Islam and conversion to Islam actually probably did not represent a dramatic change at all for many, if not most, Middle Eastern Christians in the early 'Islamic' period.

Before advancing any further, it should also be pointed out that the persistence of previous religious practices and behaviors even after conversion to Islam is neither surprising nor unique to the Middle East. It is exactly what one would expect in a pre-industrial society (and perhaps even in an industrial or post-industrial society) where states were weak, religious education and catechesis spotty, clergy often ill-equipped and poorly trained and levels of literacy relatively low. Episcopal visitors in Saxony and eastern Germany around the beginning of the seventeenth century, Ramsay MacMullen has pointed out, found that outside of elite company, the level of knowledge of Christianity plummeted markedly. 'Once out of the upper-class circles, however, and

even in a time of bitter theological rivalries to concentrate the greatest possible attention on the faith,' he reported,

> the vast bulk of the population are found to have been largely or totally ignorant of the simplest matters of doctrine, rarely or never attending church. They were devoted instead to a "vigorous religious subculture...beyond the theologian's grasp, the preacher's appeal, or the visitor's power to compel"—that is, they were given over to "soothsayers, cunning women, crystal gazers, casters of spells, witches, and other practitioners of forbidden arts."[1021]

The content, sophistication, and volume of theological literature being produced in Europe at that time, and specifically in Germany, the epicenter of the Reformation, might easily mislead us into thinking that the concerns of the elites were shared by all. But then we would be mistaken. As in seventeenth century Germany, so in the early medieval Middle East. Such will be my argument.

'Mass ideological change'? Examining Conversion

In his work on conversion to Islam, Bulliet refers to the conversion of the Middle East's population from Christianity to Islam as an example of 'mass ideological change.'[1022] One of my contentions in the past two chapters has been that the change in conversion between Christianity and Islam for the Christian carpenter or farmer or butcher was perhaps not that radical at all, especially if we keep in mind that in its earliest period, Islam, at least among the large mass of its adherents, may have been ideologically rather thin, particularly when compared to its later forms. Indeed, assuming widespread lack of knowledge of Islam among Arab conquerors may help explain why, for example, Syriac writers tend not to invoke Islam in describing the

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[1021] See R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire (A.D. 100-400)* (New Haven/London, 1984), p. 5. My thinking on the question of the Islamization of the Middle East in the early medieval period has been influenced significantly by this book.

[1022] See e.g., Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period*, p. 4.

Arab conquests: 'it would be generally true,' Brock observed, 'to say that the Syriac sources of this period see the conquests primarily as Arab, and not Muslim.'[1023]

It was precisely because such a religious change was not so radical that it was easy and that conversion became increasingly common. Viewed from a (later) doctrinal perspective, a conversion to Islam may have represented quite a drastic step. One denied such central Christian beliefs as the Trinity and the divinity of Christ and one embraced a new prophet and a new scripture. If, however, we accept a model where being Muslim did not necessarily entail a large number of strong theological commitments and at the same time we jettison a view of what it meant to be a Christian in this period which privileges doctrinal propositions and instead see Christianity as a commitment to certain shared symbols and rituals, the broad chasm people were crossing in their journey from Islam to Christianity begins to seem more like a slender crack in the earth.

Indeed, a tactic of Muslim proselytizers seeking to convert Christians down till the present has been to emphasize just how much Christianity and Islam share in common. This is a strategy that goes back to the earliest Islamic period. The *sīra* of Muḥammad contains stories of Christians recognizing Muḥammad's prophetic status which were clearly apologetic and conversionary in nature and aimed at Christians: we are told, for example, that the monk Baḥīrā, 'well versed in the knowledge of Christians,' recognized Muḥammad as foretold in Christian books while Muḥammad was still a boy,[1024] and we hear of Waraqa b. Nawfal, the cousin of Muḥammad's wife

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[1023] See S.P. Brock, 'Syriac Views of Emergent Islam,' in G.H.A. Juynboll, ed., *Studies in the First Century of Islamic Society* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1982), p. 14.

[1024] See A. Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad: A Translation of Isḥāq's Sīrat Rasūl Allāh* (London, 1955), pp. 80-81.

Khadīja, 'who had become a Christian and read the scriptures and learned from those that follow the Torah and the Gospel' providing an important early confirmation of the divine origin of Muḥammad's prophetic call.[1025] Such stories were perhaps also meant to reassure Muslims that the message brought by Muḥammad fit seamlessly into salvation history, that the reaction of a group of Abyssinian or Najrānī Christians who converted to Islam after speaking with Muḥammad in Mecca—'They recognized in him the things which had been said of him in their scriptures'—was natural and to be expected from people who had a knowledge of Christian sacred texts.[1026]

I have suggested that for many, perhaps most Christians, Christianity was not a series of doctrines to be believed, but a commitment to certain symbols and rituals which provided access to sacred power and offered means for coping with some of the most fundamental challenges in human existence. I have also attempted to show the central importance and enormous power that these symbols were believed to have held. It should not, therefore, be surprising that in the boundary lines between Christianity and Islam that were gradually erected and reinforced, it was precisely these symbols that became highly charged points, the rejection or acceptance of which placed a person solidly in one community or another. In chapter 6, I cited Anastasios of the Sinai's story about John of Bostra, a chartularios from Damascus who interviewed four demon-possessed young women in the district of Antioch. The three things they feared most from Christians, the demons told John, were the Cross, Baptism and the Eucharist, and of these three things, the Eucharist was the most powerful. This revelation, however, was not the end of the back and forth between John and the young

[1025] Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 107.

[1026] See Crone, *Meccan Trade*, pp. 219-220 for a listing of 15 different such stories and a negative assessment of their historicity.

women: the exchange would continue beyond Christianity to cover other religions. ‘Which faith do you love,’ John asked the women, ‘out of all those which exist in the world today?’ The women did not mention any one religion specifically, but offered a set of beliefs that their favorite religion(s) lack: ‘They say to him: “Those which neither have anything of the three [things] which we spoke to you of [i.e., the Cross, Baptism and the Eucharist] nor which confess either God or the Son of God, the son of Mary.’[1027]

There may have been a number of faiths which lacked the sacraments and which denied that Jesus was the Son of God, but to an audience living under Muslim rule, one faith certainly stuck out. Robert Hoyland has pointed out that one significant theme in the second collection of Anastasios’ *Narrations* where this story comes from, written around 690 AD, is an anxiety about Christian apostasy to Islam.[1028] Writing at nearly the exact same time, ca. 690-691, the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodios decried Christians apostatizing to Islam, and here again we can see the centrality of the acceptance or rejection of certain Christian symbols for marking communal belonging and participation. ‘Many people who were members of the Church will deny the true Faith of the Christians’ the anonymous author wrote, ‘along with the holy Cross and the awesome Mysteries: without being subjected to any compulsion or lashings or blows, they will deny Christ, putting themselves on a par with the unbelievers.’[1029] Abandonment of Christianity is understood in terms of a rejection of the Cross and the Mysteries and a denial of Christ.

[1027] Greek text in Nau, ‘Le texte grec des récits utiles à l’âme d’Anastase (le Sinaïte),’ p. 79: Ποίαν πίστιν ἀγαπᾶτε ἐξ ὅλων τῶν ὄντων ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ σήμερον; Λέγουσιν αὐτῷ: Οἱ μὴ ἔχουντες μήτε ἕν πρᾶγμα ἐκ τῶν τριῶν ὧν εἴπομεν σοι, μήτε ὁμολογοῦντες θεὸν ἤ υιὸν θεοῦ τὸν υἱὸν τῆς Μαρίας. Very brief French summary available in *idem*., ‘Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,’ p. 144.

[1028] Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 99-100.

[1029] Translation Brock in A. Palmer, S. Brock and R. Hoyland, *The Seventh Century in the West Syrian Chronicles* (Liverpool, 1993), p. 235. For Brock’s dating of this apocalypse, see *ibid*., p. 225.

The author of the anonymous *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, who seems to have written his work over the course of the years spanning 743 to 775 spoke bitterly of a large number of Christians converting to Islam in the later part of the eighth century. 'All wanton and careless people,' he observed

> slipped quickly into the pit and chasm of perdition, destroying their souls as well as their bodies—in other words, everything they possessed: their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; baptism; the holy seal of myron; together with the living body and purifying blood (of Christ). Instead of these, they bought for themselves unextinguishable fire, undying worm, a quarrelsome thief, Satan instead of Christ, and darkness instead of Paradise.[1030]

As with Pseduo-Methodios, leaving Christianity was understood in abandoning a particular set of symbols and rituals. The author of the *Chronicle* would make this point more than once: 'numerous people,' he later wrote, 'converted to paganism [i.e., Islam] and renounced Christ, baptism, the Eucharist and the Cross through which every human being was granted salvation. They renounced all of the things that are part of Christ's programme of salvation, only confessing that Christ was the Word and the Spirit of God [cf. Sūra 4:171].'[1031]

The account of Christian apostasy in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* is important because it serves as a caution against a view which completely evacuates doctrinal content from Christian or Muslim belief. The Christian renegades who were going over to Islam were not only rejecting certain central Christian symbols and rituals, they were also professing a new, lower Christology:

> As soon as someone asked them: 'This "Word and Spirit of God in 'Īsā", what is it? They blasphemed, saying: "He is like Moses, Elijah and Muḥammad;" the prophet who was the founder of their faith. "He is simply a prophet, like other prophets, a man like you and me." But then they professed that he was not born

[1030] Translation A. Harrak in *idem*., trans., *The Chronicle of Zuqnin: Parts III and IV. A.D. 488-775* (Toronto, 1999), p. 322. For the date of the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*'s composition, see *ibid*., p. 31.

[1031] Translation Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, pp. 326-327.

> from human seed, like anyone else, but they de[nied] him any divine substance. They only called him Word and Spirit of God, and Prophet, and one not born from the seed of man; instead, God ordered Mary and she conceived him, as the t[rees] are pollinated to pro[duce fru]it without the intervention of a male, since they are pollinated by the wind.[1032]

The actual act of converting to Islam, as depicted by the author of the *Chronicle*, entailed a renunciation of Christian symbols and an explicit affirmation of a lower Christology in addition to an acknowledgement of Islamic doctrines. The *Chronicle* speaks of a deacon from the region of Edessa who decided to convert to Islam. The priests and notables of his village tried to persuade him not to convert, but with no success. The deacon then went to an Arab and told him he wanted to convert to Islam at his hands:

> This man did not pressure him; on the contrary, he asked him not to do so lest he should regret it one day and return to his faith, in which case great tortures would then be inflicted upon him. But he said: 'If the idea of repenting will occur to me, I will not turn away from your faith, because God indicated that to me.' The man said to him: 'Do you renounce Christ?' He said, 'Yes.' Then he said to him: 'Do you renounce Baptism?' He said, 'Yes.' He said: 'I renounce it.' He then said to him: 'Do you renounce the Cross the Eucharist and everything which Christians profess?' He replied: 'I renounce them.' At this point, the son of the Devil added to these words insults not requested by the Arabs. After he made him apostatise in this manner, he asked him: 'Do you believe in Muḥammad as the messenger of God, and in the Book that descended upon him from Heaven?' He said: 'I believe.' Then he said: 'Do you believe that 'Īsā is the Word and Spirit of God, that he is a Prophet, and that he is not God?' He replied, saying: 'Yes.' Thus he made him renounce everything in his free will. For no one among the people was forcibly driven by anyone else, unless by the Devil his father, to renounce his faith, while many of them apostatised without any reason whatsoever.[1033]

The dramatic language of such an account, however, should not cause us to forget what I have previously attempted to show—it is not clear that all who called themselves Christians in the seventh or eighth centuries necessarily had a high,

[1032] Translation Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, p. 327.
[1033] Translation Harrak, *The Chronicle of Zuqnin*, p. 328.

orthodox Christology to begin with, or even any detailed Christology apart from perhaps a belief that Jesus was an especially powerful figure. And although Muslims professed a belief in a non-divine Jesus, their Jesus was still an exalted one, born of a Virgin, still called the Word of God.

This brings us back to my earlier point about apologetic and conversionary elements which made their way into the *sīra* of Muḥammad and which seemed to have been aimed specifically at Christians: we might in this connection make mention of the first Muslim *hijra*, which was to Abyssinia. With most of the young community of Muslims having fled there across the Red Sea to escape the persecution of the Quraysh, two Qurashīs came after them and sought to cause problems for them with the Negus in order to have them sent back to Mecca. Their point of attack was Christ: these Muslims, the Negus was told, speak awful things about Jesus. Summoned to give an account of Muslim beliefs, Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib gave a summary of the Qur'ān's Christology: 'We say about him that which our prophet brought, saying, he is the slave of God, and his apostle, and his spirit and his word, which he cast into Mary the blessed virgin.' The Negus was duly impressed: '[he] took a stick from the ground and said, 'By God, Jesus, son of Mary, does not exceed what you have said by the length of this stick.'[1034] Such stories were clearly aimed at commending the new faith of Islam to Christians, and if we presume ubiquitous Christian doctrinal heresy, the shift to Islam among such Christians living under Arab Muslim rule may perhaps not have been much a shift at all. To Christians like Simeon's goat herders such a high, though not divine, view of Jesus may not have struck them as particularly problematic.

[1034] Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 152.

And in fact, the image we get of doctrinally-based Christian apostasy in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* is only part of the story. When the Christian in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* was contemplating conversion, he had been told by the Muslim to be sure about his decision—if he decided to go back on it, the consequences would be dire. Though the Qur'ān had nothing explicit to say about Muslim apostates, Muḥammad is reported to have ordered death as the punishment for a Muslim who changed his religion.[1035] One possible way of interpreting the harshness of this penalty is to see it as a reflection of Muslim anxieties about shallow conversions, undertaken for reasons of expediency, which would not stick. By making death the punishment for leaving Islam once one had converted, Muslim religious authorities were attempting to keep the walls of their community from developing a multiplicity of leaks as converts seeped back out into their previous communities which were older, larger, and presumably populated by friends and relatives. A Muslim army sent by ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib in the year 38 AH (AD 658), for example, found that the Banū Nājiyya were comprised of three different groups: one which had been Christian and converted to Islam, another which was firm in its Christianity, and yet another which had been Christian, converted to Islam, and then gone back to Christianity. 'We were a people (*qawm*) who were Christians and then became Muslims,' this last group told the Muslim army, 'but we have not seen a religion which is better than our first one.' When these apostates refused to go back to Islam, the Muslim army surprised and killed all of their fighters and took their children

[1035] See the article 'Apostasy' by F. Griffel in *EI*[3]. For prophetic *hadīth* on apostasy, see, e.g., Abū Bakr ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Hammām al-Ṣanʿānī, *al-Muṣannaf* , vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 168. In general, see Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, vol. 12 (Cairo, 1996), pp. 101-162.

as captives.[1036] By making death the penalty for apostasy, Islam became a religious Hotel California—plenty of room there, but once in, one could never leave.

The fear of shallow conversions could have in part been a result of the nature of the motives underlying many of the shifts in religious allegiance. I have already suggested above that Muslim hegemony affected the religious incentive structure in areas under Muslim political control: in becoming a Muslim, one obtained immediate and tangible material benefits in addition to whatever spiritual consolations one might have gained. The massive amounts of wealth which flowed into the Muslim community as a result of its successful and far-flung conquests were unsurprisingly not without effect. ‘Every community (*umma*) has a trial (*fitna*),’ Muḥammad is reported to have said, ‘and the trial of my community is wealth.’[1037] We can see the role economic incentives played in conversion to Islam in the lifetime of Muḥammad himself. Al-Jārūd, we are told, had been a noble and a Christian in the time of the *jāhiliyya*. He came to Muḥammad as part of a delegation and Muḥammad invited him to Islam. ‘I have had a debt (*dayn*),’ he told the Prophet, ‘and I am leaving my religion (*dīnī*) for your religion (*li-dīnika*). Will you become responsible for my debt (*daynī*) for me?’ Muḥammad, we are told, stated that he would be al-Jārūd’s guarantor, telling him that God had guided him to something better. And al-Jārūd converted.[1038] Such actions by the Prophet would serve as a model for later Muslims. In the ‘Abbasid period, for instance, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal would be asked about a case where a promise of money

[1036] Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh al-rusul wa-’l-mulūk* (ser. 1, vol. 6) (repr. Piscataway, 2005), pp. 3434-3435. Another version of this story is in ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), pp. 171-172.

[1037] Translation A. Bewley, in Muhammad ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 257. Arabic text in Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 134.

[1038] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 61. With reference to ET in Bewley, trans., *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, p. 51.

played a role in a conversion to Islam. 'Abū 'Abd Allāh,' we are told, 'was asked about a man who said to a Jew: "Convert to Islam so that I give you a thousand dirhams."' And so the Jew converted, but the man did not give him the money. 'The Prophet, God's prayers and peace be upon him,' Aḥmad responded, 'would allure people into embracing Islam.' But, Aḥmad, continued, it would be better if the convert were given the money he were promised.[1039]

Perhaps most importantly for anybody other than save the most elite among non-Muslims, a conversion to Islam meant that one was no longer obliged to pay the poll tax, or *jizya*, required of all Peoples of the Book. And the importance of this can only be underestimated at the risk of obscuring and distorting our understanding of medieval social realities. Writing about the later Geniza period, Goitein documented at length the great difficulties the requirement to pay the *jizya* confronted many non-Muslims with and noted his surprise at this. 'In general,' he wrote,

> it has to be emphasized that the subject of the poll tax occupies far more space in the Geniza records than one would anticipate. A very considerable section of the non-Muslim population must have been unable to pay it and often suffered humiliation and privation on its account. Whereas, in the higher circles, the prospects of appointment to leading government posts acted as an inducement for embracing Islam, the mass conversions in the lower classes might well have been caused in part by the intolerable burden of the poll tax.[1040]

For the very early period which interests us here we of course do not have the sort of rich documentary evidence available to Goitein through the Geniza. We nevertheless possess indications that, just as would be the case centuries later in the period Goitein

[1039] 'But it only pleases me,' Aḥmad's response continued, 'that he pay him his due.' See Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khallāl, *Aḥkām ahl al-milal min al-jāmi' li-masā'il al-imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (Beirut, 1994), p. 10.

[1040] S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. Volume II: The Community* (Berkeley, 1971), pp. 392-393; also, see more generally pp. 380-393.

was studying, in the earliest period after the conquest the requirement to pay the poll tax was motivating people to become Muslims.[1041] We should not be surprised to read that ʿUmar II, for example, ordered that no *jizya* was to be collected from a *dhimmī* who converted to Islam the day before he was to pay it.[1042] Those who converted a day before their *jizya* was due could even be said to have planned ahead: apparently, some converts were literally waiting to the last second to change religious allegiance in order to get out of the burden of paying taxes: 'If he converts,' ʿUmar II is reported to have stated, 'while the *jizya* is in the weighing pan of the scale, it is not to be taken from him.'[1043]

Muslim officials connected the conversion of conquered peoples to Islam with payment of the *jizya* as well. Ḥayyān b. Shurayḥ the governor (*ʿāmil*) of Egypt wrote to ʿUmar II that *dhimmī*s were rushing to convert to Islam and had ceased paying the *jizya*. 'God sent Muḥammad as one who calls people,' ʿUmar wrote back, 'he did not send him as a tax collector. Therefore, if a person of the Book comes to you—if the People of the Covenant are rushing to convert to Islam and cutting off the payment of the *jizya*—then close your tax register (*kitābaka*) and accept him.'[1044] ʿUmar II also wrote to his governor in Khurasan, al-Jarrāḥ b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥakamī and ordered him to summon

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[1041] Issues pertaining to the exact nature of taxation on non-Muslims and converts to Islam are complex and beyond the scope of this dissertation. On this topic, see the classic D.C. Dennett, Jr., *Conversion and the Poll Tax in Early Islam* (Cambridge, Mass., 1950). For an argument about the importance of changes in administrative personnel (from Christians to Muslims) and in the manner in which the Muslim government assessed taxes in the conversion of Egypt to Islam, see, G. Frantz-Murphy, 'Conversion in Early Islamic Egypt: The Economic Factor,' in Y. Raghib, ed., *Documens de l'Islam medieval: nouvelles perspectives de recherche* (Cairo, 1991), pp. 11-17, reprinted in R. Hoyland, ed., *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 323-329.

[1042] Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 349. Literally, 'who converts to Islam a day before the year [is up].' With reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 221.

[1043] Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 349. With reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 221.

[1044] Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 373. With reference to the ET available in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 239.

the people who were paying the *jizya* to Islam. If they converted, 'Umar commanded, their Islam should be accepted, the *jizya* was to be removed from them and they were to have the same rights and duties as Muslims did. 'By God,' a member of the Khurasanī *ashrāf* is reported to have told 'Umar, 'the only thing calling them to Islam is the removal of the *jizya*. Test them with circumcision!' Hundreds of years before Goitein's Geniza documents would suggest a similar social situation, Muslims themselves saw economic motives laying behind at least some conversions. 'Shall I turn them away from Islam through circumcision?' 'Umar is said to have replied. 'If they were to become Muslims and their conversion was a good one, they would be more quick to purity.' 'Umar's logic was that genuine conversion would swiftly lead to a concern with proper Muslim observance. We do not know whether 'Umar's expectations matched with what was actually happening in Khurasan, but Ibn Sa'd does report that some 4,000 people converted to Islam as a result of his policy regarding the *jizya* and circumcision.[1045] And we have evidence from Christian authors as well that economic factors were driving at least some conversions. The Coptic synaxary reports that in the time of the Patriarch Khā'īl I (sed. 744-767) some 24,000 Christians denied Christ in Egypt; Hoyland connected this apostasy with Ḥafs b. al-Walīd's lifting of the *jizya* on all converts to Islam.[1046]

Indeed, nearly a century before this wave of apparently economically-driven conversions, the same phenomenon was already occurring among Christian

[1045] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 375. With reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, pp. 240-241. For a collection of 'Umar II's orders on the subject of taxation and conversion, see Dennett, *Conversion and the Poll Tax*, pp. 84-85.

[1046] For the mention of the conversion of these Christians, see J. Forget, ed., *Synaxarium Alexandrinum*, vol. 2 (CSCO SA 3:19) (Paris/Leipzig, 1952), p. 30. On Khā'īl I, see the article 'Khā'īl I' by S.Y. Labib in A.S. Atiya, ed., *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5, (New York, 1991), pp. 1410-1412. For Hoyland on these conversions, see *idem*., *Seeing Islam*, p. 343, esp. n. 25.

communities. In an angry letter to Simeon, the Bishop of Revardashir, the East Syrian Patriarch Isho'yahb III (d. AD 659) would lament the apparent mass apostasy of Christians in Oman in order to escape having to make a payment of half their possessions to Arab authorities. The conversions were so extensive that only two members of the clergy had remained Christian. 'How is it,' Isho'yahb would ask,

> that the great people of the Mazūnāyē [sc. Omanīs], having seen neither sword nor fire nor torments, have like lunatics been taken captive by a love of half their possessions and the depths of apostasy have suddenly swallowed them up and they have perished for eternity? Two charred brands with the name of the priesthood have been rescued from the blaze of wickedness, but they have amounted to nothing. Oh, oh, oh, the pain! Not one small Eucharist has been consecrated to God as a personal sacrifice on behalf of a true faith by the many thousands of people who were called Christians.[1047]

Isho'yahb was so extremely upset by the voluntary mass apostasy which had occurred in Oman that he would return to the issue later in the same letter. 'How on earth could your Mazūnāyē,' he asked Simeon again

> leave their faith on their own account? And this [they did] when, as the Mazūnāyē themselves will say, the Arabs did not force them to leave their faith. They only told them to let go of half their possessions and to keep their faith. But they have left their faith forever and held on to half their possessions for a small time. And it is that faith which all the nations have bought and are buying with the blood of their necks and through which they inherit eternal life, [life] that your Mazūnāyē have not bought with half their possessions.[1048]

[1047] See R. Duval, ed., *Išō'yahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO SS 2.64) (Paris, 1904), p. 248: ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܗܘ ܥܡܐ ܪܒܐ ܕܡܙܘܢܝܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܟܕ ܠܐ ܣܝܦܐ ܚܙܘ ܘܠܐ ܢܘܪܐ ܘܠܐ ܫܢܕܐ: ܒܪܚܡܬ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܕܦܠܓܘܬ ܩܢܝܢܗܘܢ ܐܬܬܨܝܕܘ ܐܝܟ ܫܢܝܐ. ܘܒܠܥܬ ܐܢܘܢ ܡܢ ܫܠܝ ܥܘܡܩܐ ܕܟܦܘܪܘܬܐ ܘܐܒܕܘ ܠܥܠܡܝܢ. ܒܗ ܬܪܝܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܐܘܕ̈ܐ ܡܚܪ̈ܟܐ: ܐܬܦܨܝܘ ܡܢ ܝܩܕܐ ܕܪܘܫܥܐ ܒܫܡܐ ܕܟܗܢܘܬܐ. ܘܥܒܪܘ ܠܠܐ ܡܕܡ. ܐܘ ܐܘ ܐܘ ܡܢ ܚܫܐ. ܘܡܢ ܗܘ ܓܒܝܬ ܐܠܦܐ ܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ ܕܡܬܩܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ: ܠܐ ܐܬܩܪܒ ܚܕ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܙܥܘܪܐ ܠܐܠܗܐ: ܒܕܒܚܐ ܦܓܪܢܝܐ ܕܚܠܦ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܫܪܪܐ. On the Mazūnāyē, see J. P. Margoliouth, *Supplement to the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith, S.T.P.* (Oxford, 1927), s.v. marūnāyā.

[1048] See Duval, *Išō'yahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum*, p. 251: ܘܐܝܟܢܐ ܒܗ ܡܙܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܠܟ. ܒܨܒܝܢܗܘܢ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ ܫܒܩܘ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܘܗܘܕܐ ܟܕ ܐܝܟ ܕܐܦ ܗܢܘܢ ܡܙܘܢܝܐ ܐܡܪܝܢ: ܠܘ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܐܠܨܘ ܘ ܐܢܘܢ ܛܝܝܐ ܠܡܫܒܩ: ܐܠܐ ܦܠܓܘܬ ܩܢܝܢܗܘܢ ܒܠܚܘܕ: ܐܡܪܘ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܡܫܒܩ ܘܠܡܐܚܕ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ. ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܫܒܩܘ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܥܠܡ. ܘܐܚܕܘ ܦܠܓܘܬ ܩܢܝܢܗܘܢ ܠܙܒܢܐ ܙܥܘܪܐ. ܘܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܗܝ ܕܟܠܗܘܢ ܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܙܒܢܘ ܘܙܒܢܝܢ ܒܕܡܐ ܕܨܘܪܝܗܘܢ ܘܒܗ ܝܪܬܝܢ ܚܝܐ ܕܠܥܠܡ: ܡܙܘܢܝܐ ܕܝܠܟ ܐܦܠܐ ܒܦܠܓܘܬܐ [ܒܦܠܓܘܬ] ܩܢܝܢܗܘܢ ܙܒܢܘܗ. W.G. Young, *Patriarch, shah, and caliph : a study of the relationships of the Church of the East with the Sassanid Empire and the early caliphates up to 820 A.D., with special reference to available*

Isho‘yahb's letter gives us evidence that the same dynamic operating in the early second/eighth century during the reign of ‘Umar II and later in Goitein's Geniza period was at work in the very earliest period of post-conquest Arab rule. When faced with the choice of converting to Islam or having to make payments to Muslim authorities, people were choosing to change their religion.

If at least some people—perhaps large numbers if Ibn Sa‘d's anecdotes from Egypt and Khurasan or Isho‘yahb's lament about mass apostasy in Oman were symptomatic of larger trends—were undertaking conversions out of economic motives, it should come as no surprise if those conversions did not stick and that renegades went back to their previous religions when they had a chance: a religious version, as it were, of buyer's remorse. A group of people in the region of the Jazira converted to Islam, we are told by one report, but after only a little while they apostatized. When informed about it, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz simply ordered that the *jizya* be re-imposed on them and they be left alone.[1049] Their fate was easier than that of those members of the Banū Nājiyya who had had the misfortune of meeting ‘Alī's army after their reversion to Christianity, but we have another example here of a pattern of conversion to Islam followed by a return to a former religion. I quoted the *Apocalypse* of Pseudo-Methodios above decrying Christian apostasy to Islam in the late seventh century, but Muslims themselves were producing apocalyptic laments about apostasy at about the same time. At the time of the death of Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya in 64 AH/AD 683—a little less than a decade before Ps.-Methodios was written—al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays wrote a letter to Qays b.

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translated Syriac sources (Rawalpindi, 1974), pp. 94-96, contains an ET of the two passages from this letter of Isho‘yahb I have cited here as well as historical discussion. Young (p. 96) suggests that the payment in question should not be confused with a *jizya*.

[1049] ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 171.

al-Haytham in which he reported apocalyptic sentiments he attributed to Muḥammad. 'I heard the Prophet of God…', al-Ḍaḥḥāk wrote, 'saying that at the Hour [there will be] calamities like clouds of smoke (*qiṭa' al-dukhān*) in which a man's heart dies just as his body dies. A man will wake up a Believer and in the evening be an infidel; in the evening he will be a Believer and in the morning an infidel. People will sell their portion of happiness and their religion for a fleeting benefit of the world.'[1050] Scholars who have focused on Christian anxieties about apostasy to Islam have seen only part of the story and are operating with the advantage of 20-20 hindsight. Because Muslims eventually achieved numeric supremacy in the Middle East—a centuries-long process—we look for and assume that conversion away from Christianity would cause consternation within the Christian community. But of course, Christians and Muslims in the seventh and eighth centuries had no way of knowing about Islam's eventual demographic triumph. If we look a bit closer and go beyond familiar passages from well-known Christian apocalyptic texts, we find evidence that at least some of these Christian apostates do not seem to have undertaken conversions which stuck and as a result, there was an Islamic anxiety about apostasy (or reversion) which was the mirror image of the Christian worry.

Statements about penalties for Muslims apostatizing in the early period also point to this simple fact that people were converting to Islam and then having second thoughts. 'Repentance is to be sought from the apostate for three days,' 'Umar II is reported to have ordered, 'if he repents [then he is to be let go], otherwise, his neck

[1050] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 131. With reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 1, p 255.

should be cut off.'[1051] One report has Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī approach Mu'ādh b. Jabal (d. 2 AH/AD 624) in Yemen accompanied by a man who had been a Jew, then converted to Islam and then gone back to Judaism. Abū Mūsā and others had been trying to bring him back to Islam for two months. 'By God,' Mu'ādh is supposed to have told Abū Mūsā, 'I will not sit down until you sever his neck.' And so, the anecdote continues, the man's head was cut off.[1052] Ibn Mas'ūd is said to have taken hold of a group of people who had apostatized from Islam in Iraq and written to the Caliph 'Umar about them. 'Show them the religion of truth,' 'Umar replied, 'and the testimony "There is no God but God." If they accept it, leave them go. But if they don't, kill them.' Some of these people accepted, we are told, and Ibn Mas'ūd let them be, but others did not, and so he killed them.[1053] There are other stories involving converts to Islam who go back to their original religion as well: al-Mustawrid al-'Ijlī was killed by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib for having gone back to Christianity after he had converted to Islam. 'Alī is supposed to have asked him to repent and also cut a cross off of his neck. When the Christians wanted al-Mustawrid's body, 'Alī had it burned.[1054] 'Alī asked another man who had converted to Islam and then apostatized to repent for a month before finally killing him.[1055]

[1051] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 344. With reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 218.

[1052] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 168.

[1053] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), pp. 168-169.

[1054] For various reports on 'Alī and al-Mustawrid, see 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* , vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 170. Note that in one version of this story (no. 18711) 'Alī only strikes al-Mustawrid with his foot and then al-Mustawrid is killed 'by the people.' Cp. the burning of al-Mustawrid's body with the burning of the body of Elias of Heliopolis (d. 799), a Christian who was accused of converting to Islam and then reverting to Christianity. After Elias had been executed and miraculous stories associated with his body began, the Muslim ruler of Damascus ordered that 'before the story of these visions spread, the saint's body should be taken down from the cross and burned with fire, so, he said, Christians may not take it and build churches and perform feasts celebrating his memory.' Trans. S. McGrath in *idem*., 'Elias of Heliopolis: The Life of an Eighth-Century Syrian Saint,' in J.W. Nesbitt, ed., *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides* (Leiden/Boston, 2003), p. 106.

[1055] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 164.

Similarly, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān asked a man who had converted to Islam and then apostatized to repent three times and then killed him when he refused.[1056]

Christian sources, too, indicate that there was movement in and out of Islam in this early period. If a person becomes a Muslim or pagan, John the Stylite wanted to know from Jacob of Edessa, and after a time repents and comes back from his paganism to Christianity, should he be baptized again?[1057] The Armenian chronicler Sebeos reported that during the First Civil War, a Muslim army of 15,000 men in Egypt converted to Christianity and was baptized.[1058] In his *Narrations Useful for the Soul*, composed ca. AD 690, Anastasios of the Sinai wrote about a certain Christian named Moses who, five years after his father died 'denied the faith of Christ' and became a Muslim. Condemned by his friends for apostasy, Moses re-converted to Christianity, but after a short while, returned to Islam; his goings back and forth between religions, Anastasios noted, earned Moses the further censure of his friends—a clear example of the sort of social pressures that might play a role in bringing converts to reconsider their decision. Anastasios himself, having been a friend of Moses as well as an old

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[1056] ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), p. 164.

[1057] A. Vööbus, ed. and trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367-368; SS 161-162) (Louvain, 1975), p. 253 (Syriac) and pp. 231-232 (ET). P. Bedjan, ed., *Nomocanon Gregorii Barhebraei* (Paris, 1898), p. 22: ܝܥܩܘܒ ܕܐܘܪܗܝ: ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܪ ܐܘ ܚܢܦܐ: ܘܗܦܟ: ܠܡܥܡܕܝܢܢ ܡܬܘܒ. ܐܠܐ ܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܬܝܒܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ: ܘܢܬܬܣܝܡ ܠܗ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܬܝܒܘܬܐ. ܘܡܐ ܕܡܫܠܡ: ܢܫܬܘܬܦ. 'Jacob of Edessa: We do not re-baptize the Christian who becomes a Hagarene or a Pagan and then returns. Instead, let the prayer of the penitents be [said] over him by the Bishop and let him be appointed a period of penitence. When he completes it, let him communicate.' Also cf. C. Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa: übersetzt und erläutert zum theil auch zuerst im grundtext veröffentlicht* (Leipzig, 1886), p. 8: ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܪ ܐܘ ܚܢܦܐ ܘܗܦܟ. ܠܐ ܡܥܡܕܝܢܢ ܡܬܘܒ. ܐܠܐ ܨܠܘܬܐ ܕܬܝܒܐ ܬܗܘܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ. ܘܢܬܬܣܝܡ ܠܗ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܬܝܒܘܬܐ. ܘܡܐ ܕܫܠܡ ܢܫܬܘܬܦ.. 'We do not baptize anew the Christian who becomes a Muslim or a pagan when he returns. Instead, let the prayer of the penitents be [said] over him by the bishop and let there be fixed for him a time of repentance; when he has completed it, let him communicate.' And also *ibid*., p. 13: ܠܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܒܪ ܘܗܦܟ. ܐܘ ܡܐ ܕܗܘܐ ܚܢܦܐ ܘܗܦܟ. ܬܗܘܐ ܥܠܘܗܝ ܨܠܘܬܐ ܡܢ ܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܐ. ܘܡܐ ܕܫܠܡ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܬܝܒܘܬܐ.. ܢܫܬܘܬܦ ܀ 'In the case of a Christian who becomes a Hagarene and returns or when he becomes a pagan and returns, let there be a prayer over him from the bishop. When he has completed the time of penitence, let him communicate.'

[1058] See R.W. Thomson, trans, with J. Howard-Johnson and T. Greenwood, *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos*, vol. 1 (Liverpool, 1999), p. 154 and see commentary in vol. 2, p. 287.

friend of Moses' father Azarias, found Moses an apostate while visiting the town of In and rebuked him for his infidelity. 'What can I do, reverend Father,' Moses asked him,

> for insofar as I turn and become a Christian, the demon harasses me and when I become an apostate again, he does not bother me at all? But the spirit has appeared to me a number of times and commanded me, saying: "Do not bow down to Christ and I will not harass you. Do not confess him as God and the Son of God and I will not draw near to you. Do not take communion and I will not trouble you. Do not make the sign of the cross and I will love you."[1059]

Anastasios has also left us a brief account of a martyr known as George the Black who was likely killed in the 650s. Taken captive while a young boy, George renounced Christianity when he was eight years old and became a Muslim. When George became an adolescent and possessed of knowledge, we are told, he went back to his original Christianity, thinking little, Athanasios noted, of the fear of any human. This act did not go unnoticed: one of George's fellow slaves, an apostate himself whom Anastasios called a 'Christ-hater' (μισόχριστος), slanderously reported George's reversion to Christianity to their master. The master sent for George and questioned him, urging the now-Muslim apostate to pray with him, but George refused.[1060] The punishment was a harsh one: he was hung in the air from his hands and feet, with his stomach facing the ground and his master cut him in half with a sword. The inhabitants of Damascus, Athanasios reported, took George's remains and placed them in a special

[1059] See S. Heid, 'Die C-Reihe erbaulicher Erzählungen des Anastasios vom Sinai im *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 2592,' *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 74 (2008), pp. 91-92 (includes GT). Καὶ τί ἔχω ποιῆσαι, κύρι ἀββᾶ, ὅτι καθό τε ἀποστρέφω καὶ γίνομαι Χριστιανός, χαλεπῶς σιαίνει με ὁ δαίμων, καὶ ἐπὰν πάλιν γένωμαι ἀποστάτης, ὅλως οὐ σιαίνει με; Ἀλλὰ καὶ πολλάκις ἐφάνη μοι τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ παρήγγειλέ μοι λέγων, Μὴ προσκυνήσῃς τὸν Χριστόν, καὶ οὐ σιαίνω σε. Μὴ ὁμολογήσῃς αὐτὸν θεὸν καὶ υἱὸν θεοῦ, καὶ οὐ προσεγγὶζω σοι. Μὴ κονωνήσῃς, καὶ οὐ παρενοχλῶ σοι. Μὴ κατασφραγίσῃ, καὶ ἀγαπῶ σε. For the date of these *Narrations* as ca. AD 690, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 99.

[1060] For the point that praying is one way (another being pronouncing the two *shahādas*) for an apostate to re-affirm his Islam, see the discussion in Ibn Qudāma, *al-Mughnī*, vol. 12, pp. 141-143.

memorial chapel.[1061] Elias of Heliopolis was accused of converting from Christianity to Islam and then going back to Christianity, a charge which he denied since he claimed to have never converted to Islam in the first place. Nevertheless, he was beaten, imprisoned and eventually executed for his apostasy from Islam. Taken before the Muslim ruler of Damascus, a nephew of the caliph al-Mahdī, the ruler informed him of an edict of the Caliph which points to Christians going back and forth between Christianity and Islam in the late eighth century as well: 'those who convert to the faith of the Arabs and then immediately convert back again to Christianity,' the ruler told Elias, 'must be imprisoned, and if then, in spite of exhortations, they do not apostatize from the faith of Christ, they should be put to death.'[1062] Sometimes a change back to Christianity would only come when the renegade was on his deathbed: is it lawful for a priest, Addai asked Jacob, to grant absolution to one who has converted to Islam or paganism if he is at the point of death?[1063]

According to al-Ṭabarī, the Christian reverts of the Banū Nājiyya had left Islam for Christianity because they had come to the conclusion that Christianity was better (*afḍal*) than Islam. But there were other factors driving peoples' decisions to switch back and forth between Islam and another religion, as we can see in another story involving 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. 'Alī, we are told, was brought an old man who had been a Christian, then converted to Islam, and then apostatized and gone back to Christianity. The first motivation 'Alī considered was a monetary one: 'You have perhaps committed

[1061] Heid, 'Die C-Reihe erbaulicher Erzählungen des Anastasios vom Sinai im *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 2592,' pp. 102-103. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 352, suggests that George converted to Islam ca. 640 and was martyred in the 650s.

[1062] Trans. S. McGrath in *idem*., 'Elias of Heliopolis: The Life of an Eighth-Century Syrian Saint,' in J.W. Nesbitt, ed., *Byzantine Authors: Literary Activities and Preoccupations. Texts and Translations dedicated to the Memory of Nicolas Oikonomides* (Leiden/Boston, 2003), pp. 100-101.

[1063] A. Vööbus, ed. and trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367-368; SS 161-162) (Louvain, 1975), p. 261(Syriac) and pp. 238 (ET).

apostasy,' 'Alī is said to have asked him, 'only in order to obtain an inheritance—then you will return to Islam?' No, the man replied. Next, 'Alī tried another reason—maybe there was a woman behind the man's religious change. 'Then perhaps you were betrothed to a woman and they refused to marry you to her,' 'Alī continued, 'so you wanted to marry her then return to Islam?' Once again, however, the man would reply in the negative. With Marx, as it were, and Freud having failed him as explanations of the apostate's behavior, 'Alī resorted to a bald exhortation: 'Then come back to Islam!' No, the man responded again, 'Until I meet Christ [i.e., until I die],' he went on, 'No!' 'Alī reacted by ordering that the man's head be cut off and his inheritance be given to his Muslim children.[1064]

Understanding many conversions as often being nominal, motivated by expediency or undertaken based on considerations in which non-religious factors figured most prominently is one way of understanding the harshness of punishments to be meted out to apostates. It was quite simple: if the doors were not locked tightly, people might leave. And the complaints of some of 'Umar II's correspondents which we saw above suggest that at least some Muslims, neither enthused at the effects of the new converts on tax revenues nor persuaded by the purity of those converts' motives, would not have been saddened by their return to their original religions.

In some of the accounts of Christian apostasy which we have seen—such as in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*—conversion to Islam and a rejection of Christianity is spelled out in what might be termed doctrinally-heavy language: the conversion is understood in part as a setting aside of one set of propositions about God, Christ, Muḥammad and

[1064] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1983), pp. 169-170.

taking up a new set. It was in this vein that Athanasios of the Sinai called the renegade Christian slave who informed his master of George the Black's reversion to Christianity a 'Christ-hater.' Such language, however, is very misleading. It is highly unlikely that this renegade, especially if he came from a Christian background, had any hostility towards Christ. I have tried to point out that the Qur'ān and Islam have historically been quite positive towards the person of Christ and this has been a major selling point used by Muslim proselytizers to woo Christians. An Islam which was hostile towards the figure of Christ would have no doubt been much less successful in converting what were some of the oldest, most populous and most intellectually sophisticated Christian regions in the world to its new religion.

Old Wine in New Wineskins: Understanding Religious Change

And it is now we can begin to see some of the payoff for jettisoning a model of early Christian-Muslim interaction which focuses on the differences in doctrines between the two religions and which pays an inordinate amount of attention to Christian-Muslim dispute texts. Such a focus is fundamentally misleading because it is first and foremost elitist. As I have attempted to point out, focusing on points of theological difference between Christians and Muslims takes as representative of Christian and Muslim viewpoints and theology the people whose views were probably the *least* representative of what the overwhelming majority of Christians and Muslims actually believed—intellectual and theological elites, persons who were often sectarian and spiritual entrepreneurs engaged in attempts at community formation, boundary maintenance and 'sheep stealing' from other confessions. In contrast to this, however, in previous chapters, I sought to show that the focus of most ordinary believers was on

things like health, safety and sheer survival and suggested that a more fruitful and productive way of thinking about Christianity in the seventh and eighth centuries was as a commitment to and belief in the power of certain symbols and rituals to help cope with the immediate and pressing struggles of everyday life.

If to be a Christian in this period meant to have a commitment to and belief in the power of certain things such as the Cross, the Eucharist, Baptism, the figure of Jesus—without necessarily being able to articulate the precise theological plumbing associated with each of them—then in certain respects an Islam that was itself doctrinally lite, as I have attempted to suggest, among the mass of its early adherents and still very much in the process of development, dispute and debate among the much smaller number of its own theological and spiritual entrepreneurs, was poised in a very advantageous position ideologically to win over large numbers of Christians to its new faith. If, for a Christian, becoming a Muslim meant only abjuration of certain rarefied doctrines which were only partially understood, or not understood at all and therefore incompletely believed (if at all) and playing no part in one's life, and at the same time conversion held out the possibility of maintaining an adherence to many familiar and cherished Christian symbols and rituals while escaping certain economic burdens, then the change that becoming a Muslim represented was as potentially attractive as it was small—which is to say, very.

Out With the Old, In with the...Old

At present, however, I am concerned with the question of understanding early Christian-Muslim interaction and religious conversion once we have abandoned a doctrinal perspective on these two religions and understood them in terms of rituals

and symbols. What is very important to point out is that it seems to have been the case that it was both possible and easy for a person to become a Muslim and yet maintain one's veneration for Christian symbols and rituals: one could move into a new house, so to speak, but keep much of the same and comfortable furniture from one's previous habitation. Later periods in Islamic history are much better documented in this regard. F.W. Hasluck pointed to numerous examples of wide-ranging continuations of Christian practices and use of Christian symbols by Muslims in the medieval and Ottoman periods: a cross marked on a stone used for curing; bread inscribed with crosses before baking; cross tattoos; phylacteries with the name 'wood of the Cross;' a cross placed in the minaret of a mosque to defend against bad luck; Muslim women having their babies baptized for protection; the name of Jesus or a cross or the first lines of the Gospel of John worn in protective amulets, for example.[1065] Similarly, Manolis Peponakis has collected evidence of a deep and extensive persistence of former Christian practices among rural converts to Islam in Crete: they wore the same clothes, drank wine and ate pork, invoked the Virgin, calling her 'Meire-Mana' (Μεϊρέ-μάνα), revered Christ, Saint John, Saint Spiridon, took ex-voto offerings to the Monastery of St George (whose feast day coincided with the Bektashis' spring festival), carried small lamps to country chapels, accepted the blessings of priests and called to the Virgin for help for pregnant women, took part in rites Christians performed to drive away plague and would even pay for Christian baptisms, though they themselves would not be present at the actual performance of the Mystery.[1066] Writing about the Balkans, Speros Vryonis noted a host of Christian survivals among Muslim communities there: not only did Muslims have

[1065] F.W. Hasluck, *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, vol. 1, (Oxford, 1929), pp. 30-37.

[1066] I have here basically translated a passage from M. Πεπονάκης, *Εξισλαμισμοί και επανεκχριστιανισμοί στην Κρήτη* (1645-1899) (Rethymno, 1997), pp. 75-76.

their children baptized, they also venerated Christian holy men and saints. What's more,

> Many observed Easter by taking colored eggs from the Christians, which, they believed, would assure good health. In connection with health, they brought ill children to church on Good Friday, visited the local *ayasma* [sacred spring], sought the blessing of the priest in church on feast days, and took holy water from the priest for the benefit of the family members and the livestock. They made offerings to church icons, frequently and covertly kept church books and icons in their houses, and continued to perform animal sacrifices in the courtyards of certain churches and monasteries.

Muslim wedding ceremonies used pre-Islamic elements, Vryonis noted, Muslims continued celebrating the feast days of the saints who had been their family patrons when they were still Christian, and celebrated the feasts of Christian saints such as George, John, Peter and Barbara.[1067]

We have no reason to believe that in the earliest centuries of Islamic history, when the script of Islamic orthodoxy was still being hammered out the situation would have been any less hybrid and mixed-up than it was in the later periods which scholars like Hasluck, Peponakis, and Vyronis studied; in fact, because what would become the central institutions, rites, texts and habits of later Islamic orthodoxies either did not yet exist or were in their very earliest stages of development, we should assume that the level of hybridity in this early period was even greater, especially if the large majority of Muslims had become Muslim through group conversion and possessed little profound acquaintance with the content, such as it was, of their new religion. For all

[1067] See S. Vryonis, 'Religious Changes and Patterns in the Balkans, 14th-16th Centuries,' in H. Birnbaum and S. Vryonis, Jr., eds., *Aspects of the Balkans: Continuity and Change. Contributions to the International Balkan Conference held at UCLA, October 23-28, 1969* (The Hague/Paris, 1972), pp. 173-176, quote on p. 175. My thinking about the role of religious syncretism played in Christian-Muslim conversion has been influenced by Vryonis' ideas, both in this article as well as in his *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1971), pp. 351-402.

our labels—Miaphyiste, Chalcedonian, Nestorian, Muslim, pagan, etc.—all the people we are dealing with in the seventh century shared one fundamental and inescapable fact in common: they were human beings and as such, had similar worries and anxieties about health, safety, their families, death and the afterlife as others did. Such concerns were ecumenical and interfaith in the broadest sense and many showed pronounced willingness to be equally interfaith and ecumenical when it came to dealing with these anxieties. Part of the growth and development of Christianity entailed a working out of a repertoire of tools for addressing and dealing with such issues of pressing concern and many Muslims seemed to have no great qualms in availing themselves of such resources and Christian converts to Islam seemed to see no great contradiction or tension in continuing to draw upon them once they had crossed over into a different religion; this is the dynamic underlying the sorts of hybridity of religious practice that we see in the Ottoman period. We have no reason to believe that it was a phenomenon which began only at that relatively late date, either.

Indeed, if we go over our sources from the seventh and eighth centuries we will find traces and hints of precisely the same sort of Muslim continuation of and veneration for Christian symbols and rituals going on which is so abundantly documented for later periods. The Arabs, Isho‘yahb III would write in the middle of the seventh century, ‘are not only not opposed to Christianity, they also sing the praises of our Faith and honor priests and the saints of Our Lord and aid churches and monasteries.’[1068] At the end of the same century, John of Phenek would attribute the

[1068] See R. Duval, ed., *Išō‘yahb III Patriarcha: Liber Epistularum* (CSCO SS 2.64) (Paris, 1904), p. 251:
ܘܐܦ ܓܝܪ ܛܝܝܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܒܗܘܢ ܝܗܒ ܐܠܗܐ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢܐ ܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܥܠܡܐ: ܗܐ ܠܘܬܢ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܝܕܥܝܬܘܢ. ܘܠܐ ܠܘܩܒܠ ܕܟܪܣܛܝܢܘܬܐ ܠܐ ܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ: ܐܠܐ ܐܦ ܡܫܒܚܢܐ ܐܢܘܢ ܕܗܝܡܢܘܬܢ.

coming of Arab rule to God's care for Christians. 'We should not think of the advent (of the children of Hagar) as something ordinary,' he wrote,

> but as due to divine working. Before calling them (God) had prepared them beforehand to hold Christians in honour; thus they also had a special commandment from God concerning our monastic station, that they should hold it in honour.[1069]

Theodota of Amid (d. AD 698) was a holy man who was active in northern Mesopotamia over the course of the second half of the seventh century and in his *Life* we find more than just broad statements expressing a generally positive Arab disposition towards Christianity or Christians. What we find are a number of instances where Arabs show respect, deference and even reverence for Christian figures, symbols and institutions. When the Miaphysite Patriarch Theodore died ca. AD 649, for example, we are told that 'his disciples and the members of his monastery wept, as did the cities and villages and the believing peoples and the Arabs.'[1070] Within the first decades of the Arab conquest, therefore, a Christian patriarch might hold a position of honor for Muslims such that his death would be mourned by them and Christians alike. Arab reverence for the Patriarch Theodore was no isolated incident, either. Later in the *Life* we find the Patriarch Julian II (sed. AD 687-708) receiving similar treatment. Theodore 'entered Amid with great honor,' the *Life* states, 'and the Christians and the Arabs who were present in Amid went out to meet him.' And if the Arabs who celebrated Julian's entry along with the Christians of Amid were bothered by the lamps,

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ܘܡܝܩܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܘܕܩܕܝ̈ܫܘܗܝ ܕܡܪܢ. ܘܡܥܕܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܥܕ̈ܬܐ ܘܕܝܪ̈ܬܐ. 'For the Arabs, also, to whom God has given in this time authority over the world, [who] indeed, as you know, are with us and are not only not against Christianity but are people who praise our faith and who honor our priests and the saints of Our Lord and people who support churches and monasteries...'

1069 Translation S.P. Brock in *idem*., 'North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John Bar Penkāyē's *Rīš Mellē*,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987), p. 57.

1070 St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 548b (section 29 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 491. For Theodore's date of death, see W. Hage, *Die syrisch-jacobitische Kirche in frühislamischer Zeit. Nach orientalischen Quellen* (Wiesbaden, 1966) (table insert).

crosses and incense that the *Life* notes were present there, their displeasure was not noted by the *Life*.[1071]

Theodota, for his part, was a charismatic holy man who could work miracles. His ecumenical appeal and power extended to include Jews, Muslims, pagans and heretical (i.e., non-Miaphysite) Christians and we see a number of occasions where Arab Muslims act reverentially towards this Christian saint; Theodota's *Life* even credits him with saving 'many souls from among the Arabs and Romans' in the border area between the Caliphate and Byzantium.[1072] Muslim authorities were attracted to this figure. The governor of Dara, called Ilūsṭrayya in the *Life*, was keen to meet Theodota and when the holy man passed near the city, we are told that this official and 'his wife went out along with their children and they prostrated before them and were blessed by him.' Eager to have Theodota stay in his region, Ilūsṭrayya promised the holy man that he would pay the *jizya* of the monastery of Mar Abay at Qeleth out of his own pocket at Theodota's request. Theodota settled at Mar Abay and built a cell there.[1073] Earlier, while Theodota was staying at the Monastery of Mar Shemʿūn in Qartmin, the Arab governor (ἄρχων) of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn came to visit him and sought to be blessed by him and enjoy his conversation. But Theodota demurred. He later relented and visited the governor in his camp. When the holy man approached him, 'the governor rose up and prostrated to him,' we are told

> and said, 'You are Theodota, whose report has gone out.' Then the Blessed One said to him, 'What you have heard about me is a lie, for I am weak and a sinner.

[1071] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 556a (section 133 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 544.

[1072] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 551a (section 74 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 503: ܣܓܝ ܓܝܪ ܢ̈ܦܫܬܐ ܦܪܩ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܘܡܢ ܪ̈ܗܘܡܝܐ.

[1073] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 555b (section 127 in my edition).

> And I have gone out weeping over my sins.' The governor said, 'Look! Truly you are a disciple of Jesus and a Blessed One among the people!'[1074]

Theodota had had the option of saying no to the Arab ruler who wanted to speak with him and receive his blessing, but this does not always seem to have been the case for Christian clergy who were being sought out by Muslim officials. What should be done, Addai asked Jacob, if an Amīr commands the steward of a monastery to eat with him from the same dish? Should the man eat or should he refuse? 'I do not permit him,' Jacob replied, 'but necessity does.'[1075]

The Arab official who had wanted to see Theodota had sought him out because of his reputation, but Theodota's reception among Arab administrators was not uniformly positive, at least initially. Because the holy man had written a letter to people living in Byzantine territory, an unnamed Arab who was in authority over Amid had Theodota seized and accused him of being a friend of the Byzantines. This action upset not only the entire city, we are told, but also all of the Arab cavalry there. Theodota was dragged to the local mosque and when the accusing Arab kicked him and he fell to the ground, 'all the Arabs cried out with a great shout and there was great pain in the Church of Our Lord.' The Arabs, like the Christians, were clearly not happy at the way Theodota was being treated. The Arab leader, however, was soon humbled: God took his sight away. Desperate, he sent for Theodota

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[1074] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 555b, (section 126 in my edition). In Syriac, the governor is called both ܐܪܟܘܢ and ܐܪܟܘܢܐ For the Syriac text, see Mardin 275/8, p. 538.

[1075] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 156: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܦܩܕ ܠܗ ܐܡܝܪܐ ܠܪܒܝܬܐ ܦܪܢܣܐ ܕܥܘܡܪܐ ܕܢܐܟܘܠ ܥܡܗ ܒܠܓܢܐ. ܢܐܟܘܠ ܐܘ ܠܐ ܢܐܟܘܠ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܠܗܢܐ ܐܢܐ ܡܢ ܠܐ ܡܦܣ ܐܢܐ. ܡܦܣܐ ܠܗ ܕܝܢ ܐܢܢܩܝܐ܀ 'Addai: If an Amīr commands the steward of a monastery to eat with him in [the same] dish, should he eat or should he not eat? Jacob: I do not permit him, but necessity does.' See also Mardin 310, fols. 204a-204b (pp. 405-406).

> He fell down, prostrating to him and said, 'O Friend of God, have mercy on me! And forgive me leave for what I have sinned against you; and give me the light of my eyes which you have taken from me!

Theodota would heal the Muslim authority by making the sign of the cross in the name of Jesus over his eyes.[1076] This was a moment of great triumph for the Christian holy man. He went out from the ruler's presence, we are told, in a great procession and 'Christians, Arabs and pagans were blessed by him.' The leader who had persecuted him was soon recalled from his position and, as he was leaving Amid, fell from his horse and died from his injury. 'And so the people feared God and feared His servant,' the *Life* tells us.[1077] Not long after this, Theodota was made Bishop of Amid. Everyone in the city rejoiced, including its administrators, presumably Muslims, who were 'radiant in every adornment,' as well as 'the Arabs and all the cavalry, who were giving pleasing things to the city.'[1078] Later in his life, Theodota would be given authority over the legal affairs of all the Christians of Amid, and it seems that the Christian bishop had the respect and obedience of local Muslim administrators: 'So the fear of the Blessed One was upon all the people; and on the chief men and administrators and those who stand before the officers of the ruler of this world,' the *Life* reports, 'They were obeying his command and the city and its territory were preserved from evils.'[1079] Also late in life, Theodota passed through Edessa where, we are told, the chief men and administrators 'rejoiced when they heard about the Holy Theodota and they sought to see him with

[1076] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 556b (sections 135-136 in my edition). For the Syriac text, see Mardin 275/8, pp. 547-549.

[1077] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fols. 556b-557a (section 137 in my edition). For the Syriac text, see Mardin 275/8, p. 549.

[1078] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 557a (section 138 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 550: ܘܚܕܝܬ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ. ܘܐܬܦܨܚܘ ܐܒܗܘܬܐ ܒܙܘܢܝ̈ ܐ ܩܘܙܡܐ. ܕܣܝܘ ܛܝܝܐ ܕܦܝ̈ܣ ܒܣܡ. ܡܕܒܪ̈ܢܐ ܕܟܠ ܝ̈ ܬܠܡ ܡܦܪ ܚܡ. ܣܐܕܘܬܐ ܚܠܡܝ ܘܚܠܘܬܠܬܐ ܕܟܚܠ ܕܬܗ ܐܕܠܝܗ ܠܡܩܪܝܗܡ. ܬܫܚܠܐ ܕܡܢܚܡܝܢ. ܕܐܚܟܐ ܕܡܟܝܟܬ ܙܘܫܐ ܕܝܒ ܚܠܡ. ܠܬܝܒܐ ܘܚܠܘܗܝ ܦܬܥܐ ܕܢܘܚܡ ܠܝܒܟܐ ܠܡܕܝܢܬܐ...

[1079] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 558a (section 158 in my edition).

every effort. They went out to him and they greeted him and he prayed for them.'[1080] Similarly, according to Theophanes, the Caliph Hishām was friends with a monk from Syria named Stephen, whom he allowed the Christians to elect as Patriarch of Antioch, ending a forty-year period in which permission to elect a patriarch had not been granted by Muslim authorities.[1081]

Attraction to the power of the Christian holy man transcended all sectarian and confessional boundaries. The Miaphysite martyrology of Rabban Sliba, for example, would include a number of Chalcedonian saints among those it commemorated.[1082] In this same vein, though Theodota was a Miaphysite we find a Nestorian in pain seeking him out for healing and prayer.[1083] Muslims, too, approached Theodota for help: 'A certain Arab came to the Holy One,' the *Life* states.

> He had been seized by a difficult pain and was unable to walk. He therefore fell before the feet of the Holy One. His disciple begged him to pray for him, so he gave an order and a blessing came, then he anointed him with it. And he went away healthy and thanking God.[1084]

We have other examples of Christian holy men healing Muslims. Rabban Khudhāwī healed the withered limb of one of the Caliph Mu'āwiya's daughters by baptizing her.[1085] When 'Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād (d. 67 AH/AD 686), the governor of Iraq, was suffering from a pain in his leg that was so bad he could not stand on it, he sent to

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1080 St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 560a (section 185 in my edition). A little while later (St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 560b (section 192 in my edition) and Mardin 275/8, pp. 575-576, we learn that the 'leaders and nobles' (ܡܕܒܪ̈ܢܐ ܘܚܐܪ̈ܐ) of Mardin, Dara, Tur 'Abdin, and Ḥesnā d-Kīfā (= Stone Fortress) were eager to come out and meet Theodota and be blessed by him. Some of these may have been Muslims, some may have been Christians.

1081 C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 577.

1082 See. P. Peeters, 'Le martyrologe de Rabban Sliba,' *Analecta Bollandiana* 27 (1927), p. 134.

1083 St Mark's Jerusaelm 199, fol. 560b (section 196 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 576.

1084 St Mark's Jerusaelm 199, fol. 560b (section 195 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 576.

1085 See A. Scher, ed. and trans., *Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert)*, pt. 2, (PO 13) (Paris, 1919), p. 594 (with FT). For this, S. Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā fī khilāfat banī Umayya*, vol. 3 (Beirut, 2005), p. 584.

the Christian holy man ʿAbdā b. Ḥanīf for help. Mar ʿAbdā sent ʿUbayd Allāh his staff with the advisory that when he used it for support, he would be healed; sure enough, once he used the staff, ʿUbayd Allāh was cured immediately.[1086] In the mid-seventh century, ʿUtba, the governor of the province of Beth Garmai asked Sabrīshūʿ, the area's metropolitan, to pray for two of his daughters who were afflicted by Satan. After seven days of his constant fasting, the girls were healed.[1087] Also in the seventh century, John of Daylam visited ʿAbd al-Malik in Damascus. The Caliph 'asked him to pray for his daughter, who was tried by demons. She was healed, and the king, delighted, gave him royal gifts.' John, however, did not want gifts: what he wanted was permission to build churches and monasteries, so ʿAbd al-Malik obliged, giving an order that John should be permitted to build churches and monasteries wherever he wanted and at the ruler's expense, no less.[1088] According to a verse panegyric on John of Daylam, however, it was ʿAbd al-Malik's son, not his daughter that John healed: 'John washed his cross (in water) and signed it over the child's head, whereupon he was healed.'[1089] John also visited the famous Muslim governor al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf whom, according to the same panegyric, he cured of cancer; Arabic sources in fact offer some corroboration of this account of John's treatment of al-Ḥajjāj.[1090] The Chalcedonian Stephen of Mar Sabas (d. 794) was another such ecumenical and interfaith figure. 'Every request brought to him, he fulfilled,' his *Life* tells us, 'whether it be of the spirit or the body. He denied no one, but

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[1086] See A. Scher, ed. and trans., *Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert)*, pt. 2, (PO 13) (Paris, 1919), p. 589 (with FT). For this, see S. Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā fī khilāfat banī Umayya*, vol. 3 (Beirut, 2005), p. 584.

[1087] See A. Scher, ed. and trans., *Histoire nestorienne (Chronique de Séert)*, pt. 2, (PO 13) (Paris, 1919), p. 632 (with FT). For this, see S. Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā fī khilāfat banī Umayya*, vol. 3 (Beirut, 2005), p. 584. For Sabrīshūʿ as possibly a contemporary of Ishoʿyahb III, see Scher, p. 632, n. 1.

[1088] Translation S.P. Brock in *idem*., 'A Syriac Life of John of Dailam,' *Parole de l'orient* 10 (1981-1982), pp. 148-149, quote on p. 148.

[1089] Translation Brock in 'A Syriac Life of John of Dailam,' p. 165.

[1090] See Brock, 'A Syriac Life of John of Dailam,' p. 168.

received all with the same respect, not favoring one above another. He showed mercy and compassion not only to Christians but also to Muslims. These he would feed with abundant food of diverse kinds.'[1091] Was it right, John of Litarb had asked Jacob of Edessa, for a priest to give the blessings of the saints to Hagarenes and pagans who were afflicted by evil spirits, that they might rub them and thereby be healed? Jacob had been unequivocal in his response: it was by all means right to do so and such things should be given without restraint.[1092] Muslims, too, would later show a latitudinarian attitude towards confronting problems and afflictions which were common across religious borders. When he was asked, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH/AD 855) saw no harm in People of the Book making supplication for rain (*istisqā'*) alongside Muslims.[1093]

Christian churches seem to have been objects of interest for some Muslims. This, at least, is presumed by a clause in one version of the so-called 'Pact of 'Umar': 'we will not raise our voices in prayer or in [scriptural] recitation,' the Christians promise, 'in our churches while Muslims are present.'[1094] Other versions of the 'Pact of 'Umar' had clauses in which Christians promised to not forbid Muslims from staying there, day or not, and in which they agreed to open their doors to travelers and wayfarers.[1095] Muslim interest in churches is borne out by other evidence as well. In a short report, Ismā'īl b. Rāfi' spoke of visiting 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz in a church after he was made

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[1091] Trans. J.C. Lamoreaux in *idem*., ed. and trans., *The Life of Stephen of Mar Sabas*, (Arabic) p. 146; (ET) p. 131.

[1092] See K.-E. Rignell, *A Letter from Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite of Litarab Concerning Ecclesiastical Canons edited from Ms. Br. Mus. Add. 14,493 with Introduction, Translation and Commentary. Syriac Text with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Lund, 1979), p. 52. The Syriac text with an ET can be found above in n. 738.

[1093] See Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn b. Yazīd al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmi'*, vol. 2, (Riyadh, 1996), p. 120 (no.s 127-128).

[1094] *wa-lā narfa'u aṣwātanā fī 'l-ṣalāt wa-lā al-qirā'a fī kanā'isinā fīmā yaḥḍuruhu al-Muslimūn*. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* (Cairo, 1950), p. 121.

[1095] See the two versions of the *shurūṭ 'umariyya* ('stipulations of 'Umar') recorded in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1995), pp. 113, 114.

Caliph.[1096] It is not clear what exactly ʻUmar was doing there, and this may not have been immediately after he was declared Caliph; nevertheless, ʻUmar II was not the first Umayyad to go to a church after becoming Caliph. According to the mid-seventh century *Maronite Chronicle*, after being made Caliph in Jerusalem, Muʻāwiya ʻwent up and sat down on Golgotha; he prayed there, and went to Gethsemane and went down to the tomb of the blessed Mary to pray in it.'[1097] What is more, when an earthquake destroyed the ciborium and two walls of the church of Edessa in 59 AH/AD 679, Muʻāwiya ordered them rebuilt.[1098] And ʻAbd al-Malik, as we have just seen, is supposed to have offered to pay for whatever churches and monasteries John of Daylam wanted to build. Ilūsṭrayya, the administrator of Dara, helped Theodota build his monastery at the end of the holy man's life.[1099] Imperial patronage of church and monastery construction may explain why, writing even as the Dome of the Rock was under construction, Anastasios of the Sinai reported the story of his own personal realization that demons had been at work clearing rubble off the Temple Mount thirty years previous: he considered it necessary to write such things down ʻon account of those who think and say that what is being built right now in Jerusalem is a temple of God.' In other words, while the Dome of the Rock was being built, it seems, at least some

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[1096] Ibn Saʻd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, p. 374. With reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 2, p. 240.

[1097] Translation Palmer in Palmer, et al., *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, p. 31.

[1098] See J.-B. Chabot, ed. *Chronique de Michel le syrien, patriarche jacobite de Antioche (1166-1199)* (Paris, 1899-1910), vol. 4 (Syriac) 436-437; vol. 2 (FT) 457.

[1099] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 560b (section 193 in my edition). For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 576. The Syriac is lacunose and reads: ܘܐܦ ܐܝܠܘܣܛܪܝܐ ܕܕܪܐ. ܐܬܐ ܚܕܝ، ܒܚܙܘܗ ܕܛܘܒܢܐ ܣܓܝ ܓܝܪ ܪܚܡ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܠܛܘܒܢܐ. ܘܐܡܪ ܠܗ (ܩܕܝܫܐ) ܬܐܘܕܘܛܐ. ܬܐ ܒܢܝ ܕܝܪܐ ... ܘܫܡܥܗ ܚܕܘܐܝܬ ܘܫܡܠܝ ܐܠܗܐ ܢܝܚܗ. ʻAs for Ilūsṭrayya of Dara, he came and rejoiced at the sight of the Blessed One, for he greatly loved the Blessed One. And the (holy) Theodota said to him, "Come, build a monastery!' ... and he heard him joyfully and God made his rest complete.' The Karshūnī translation makes it explicit that Ilūsṭrayya greatly loved Theodota, but the Syriac is ambiguous and could also be read, ʻFor the Blessed One greatly loved him (sc. Ilūsṭrayya).'

Christians believed that it was some sort of Christian structure. The Dome of the Rock's physical similarity to other Christian structures also could have played a role in this belief among Christians that 'Abd al-Malik was building a church. After all, only a few miles from Jerusalem was the fifth-century Church of the Kathisma, an octagonal structure, built around a sacred rock (where the Virgin had sat to rest on two different occasions—hence the church's name), which had undergone restoration in the early seventh century and whose mosaics in places resembled those of the Dome of the Rock.[1100] Whatever the causes behind these Christian rumors that 'Abd al-Malik was building a church on the Temple Mount, Anastasios was certain the Caliph was doing no such thing: 'For how could a temple of God be built in that place?' he asked, citing Christ's statement that the area would be a wasteland (Mt. 23:38).[1101]

And Caliphs, of course, were not the only Muslims who were interested in churches. Throughout Syria, churches were turned into mosques after the conquests, or partitioned to serve as places of worship for both Christians and Muslims.[1102] In the *Life* of Theodota we even find Arabs present at one of the holy man's homilies.[1103] Yāqūt

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[1100] On the Church of the Kathisma and the Dome of the Rock, see O. Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, Mass./London, 2006), pp. 104-106. Grabar, p. 106, is cautious in accepting the idea that the Church of the Kathisma served as a model for the Dome of the Rock. I am not, however, making such a suggestion here, but am rather speculating that the resemblance between the two structures may have caused some to think that 'Abd al-Malik's new structure would be a church like the nearby Church of the Kathisma.

[1101] Heid, 'Die C-Reihe erbaulicher Erzählungen des Anastasios vom Sinai im *Codex Vaticanus Graecus* 2592,' p. 82: Ταῦτα δὲ ἀναγκαῖον ἐσκόπησα ἐντάξαι διὰ τοὺς νομίζοντας καὶ λέγοντας ναὸν θεοῦ εἶναι τὸν νῦν κτιζόμενον ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. Πῶς γὰρ κτισθήσεται ναὸς θεοῦ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ ἐκείνῳ; See also B. Flusin, 'L'esplanade du temple a l'arrivée des arabes, d'après deux récits byzantins,' in J. Raby and J. Johns, eds., *Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem. Part One* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 17-31.

[1102] See K.A.C. Creswell, *A Short Account of Early Muslim Architecture* (repr. Beirut, 1968), p. 7.

[1103] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 557a (section 143 in my edition): 'On Sunday, the entire city assembled to convey the Holy One up to the church. And he spoke to them from the pulpit; when he ascended for his homily, the Arabs and the Christians gathered to see him and the church was filled inside and out and there was an enormous multitude. At the end of his homily, he fell down on his face before all of them above the pulpit and there was a great cry and much weeping.' For the Syriac, see Mardin 275/8, p. 551.

(d. 626 AH/AH 1229) reported that he had heard that the monks of the Monastery of Bar Ṣawmā near Melitene would pay the Byzantine Emperor 10,000 dinars every year on behalf of Muslims who had made vows there.[1104] Various *ḥadīth* attributed to ʻUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb have him refusing to go into churches on account of the images (*ṣuwar* or *tamāthīl*) present in them and Ibn ʻAbbās, we are told, disapproved of praying in churches if there were images (*tamāthīl*) in them.[1105] The existence of such reports suggests, of course, that some Muslims had no such qualms, and even in normative Islamic sources we can find intimations of the spectrum of attitudes towards Muslim prayer in Christian places of worship which are suggested by reports of such activities in Christian texts. The last *ḥadīth* listed by ʻAbd al-Razzāq's section on 'Prayer in a church' has Salmān al-Fārisī—himself a Christian renegade—seeking a place to pray. 'Seek a pure heart,' a foreign woman (*ʻilja*) told him, 'and pray where you will.'[1106] '*ʻIlja*' can also have the connotation 'unbeliever,'[1107] but ʻAbd al-Razzāq would hardly have recorded a normative anecdote of Salmān taking advice about where to pray from a non-Muslim. What this incident may be suggestive of, therefore, is the openness of foreign converts to Islam to the use of their former places of worship for Islamic prayer.

Churches also held attractions for Muslims who were not former Christian converts. ʻĀmir b. ʻAbd Allāh b. ʻAbd al-Qays, who died at some point during the reign

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[1104] See Abū ʻAbd Allāh Yāqūt b. ʻAbd Allāh al-Ḥamawī, *Muʻjam al-buldān*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1957), p. 500. For this point, see S. A. Mourad, 'Christian Monks in Islamic Literature: A Preliminary Report on Some Arabic Apothegmata Patrum,' *Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies* 6:2 (2004), p. 84.

[1105] For these reports, see ʻAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 1(Beirut, 1970), pp. 411-412 (ʻUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb: nos. 1610, 1611; Ibn ʻAbbās: no. 1608).

[1106] See ʻAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* , vol. 1 (Beirut, 1970), p. 412 (no. 1612).

[1107] See E.W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863), s.v. *ʻilj*.

of Mu‘āwiya, was famous for his ascetic ways.[1108] When Ka‘b al-Aḥbār saw ‘Āmir in Syria he said of him, ‘This is the monk of this community.’[1109] Ibn Sa‘d records a story in which ‘Āmir and a group of others made a raid. Afterwards, the Muslims camped in a certain spot, but ‘Āmir went away and alighted at a church. Placing a man at the church’s door, he gave a stern order that no one was to be allowed to enter in to his presence. When the commander of the raid asked to be allowed to come in, ‘Āmir agreed. ‘I adjure you by God—may He make you remember,’ ‘Āmir told him, ‘to cause me to desire this world or make me indifferent to the next.’[1110] Given his ascetic profile, ‘Āmir’s choice of visiting this church and wanting solitude there seems to have hardly been coincidental.

Not all Arab interest in what was going on inside churches was always as benign as in the cases of Mu‘āwiya, ‘Umar II, the Arabs who attended Theodota’s homily, ‘Āmir b. ‘Abd Allāh, and perhaps Salmān and his foreign female advisor. ‘Is it necessary that the doors of the church be shut when the Eucharist is being celebrated?’, John the Stylite of Litarb asked Jacob of Edessa. It is indeed necessary, Jacob responded, ‘especially on account of the Hagarenes, lest they enter into the church and mix with the believers and disturb them and mock the holy mysteries.’[1111] What should happen

[1108] For ‘Āmir, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl*, vol. 14 (Beirut, 1988), pp. 64-65.

[1109] Trans. A. Bewley, in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 68. Arabic in Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 79.

[1110] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 79. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 68.

[1111] Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) p. 237: ܝܘܚܢܢ. ܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܐ ܕܢܬܬܚܕܘܢ ܬܪ̈ܥܐ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܗܫܐ ܟܕ ܡܬܩܪܒܐ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܘܠܐ ܐ ܗܕܐ ܘܝܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܡܛܠ ܡܗܓܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܥܠܘܢ ܘܢܬܚܠܛܘܢ ܥܡ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܘܢܕܘܕܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܘܢܒܙܚܘܢ ܒܐ̈ܪܙܐ ܩܕ̈ܝܫܐ. ‘John: Is it necessary that the doors of the church be shut nowadays when the Eucharist is being offered up? Jacob: This is necessary and especially on account of the Hagarenes, lest they enter in and be mixed with the believers and disturb them and mock the holy mysteries.’ My translation. ET also available in *idem*., trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 368: SS 162), p. 219. NB: Vööbus renders ‘*mhaggraye*’ as ‘perverts to Islam,’ rather than simply ‘Muslims.’

to a holy *ṭablīthā*, Addai asked Jacob, referring to a consecrated block of wood placed on the altar for the Eucharistic celebration,[1112] which the Arabs have eaten meat upon and left with stained and defiled with fat? A *ṭablīthā* upon which pagans have eaten, Jacob responded, is no longer an altar. It can be washed and used for other purposes, or perhaps broken up and buried in the earth, but it will be retired from Eucharistic duties.[1113] In his *Questions and Answers* Anastasios of the Sinai, Jacob's contemporary, wrote about Arabs defiling Christian altars and holy places[1114] and, similarly, in his *Stories Useful for the Soul* Anastasios wrote about twenty four Arabs living in and defiling a church dedicated to the martyr Theodore located in a village outside of Damascus named Karsatas: one of the Arabs even shot an arrow at the image of St Theodore in the church.[1115]

We have other narrative sources which put a fuller face on what can seem rather abstract when read as part of Jacob's canons. While he was still a Muslim, Rawḥ al-Qurashī (d. AD 799), actually lived in the Monastery of St Theodore in Damascus. Rawḥ was, we are told, very fond of the church there: he would steal its Eucharist and eat it, would drink what remained of the consecrated wine in the cup. He would take crosses from their places, tear up altar coverings and frequently show up when the

[1112] I am grateful to Sebastian Brock for giving me this definition of a *ṭablīthā.*

[1113] Mardin 310, fol. 200a: ܐܕܝ. ܡܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܗܘܐ ܠܛܒܠܝܬܐ ܩܕܝܫܬܐ: ܕܐܟܠܘ ܥܠܝܗ̇ ܛܝܝܐ ܒܣܪܐ ܘܐܪܦܝܘܗ̇ ܟܕ ܡܛܠܦܦܐ ܬܪܒܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ. ܠܛܒܠܝܬܐ ܕܐܟܠܘ ܥܠܝܗ̇ ܚܢܦܐ. ܠܐ ܡܟܝܠ ܐܝܬܝܗ̇ ܡܕܒܚܐ. ܐܠܐ ܬܬܚܫܠ ܠܛܒܐܝܬ ܘܬܬܡܪܩ. ܘܬܗܘܐ ܠܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܦܫܝܛܬܐ ܕܒܝܬ ܩܘܕܫܐ ܐܘ ܠܒܝܬ ܕܝܐܩܘܢܝܩܘܢ. ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܙܥܘܪܬܐ ܗ̇ܝ، ܘܒܨܝܪܬ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ. ܬܬܒܪ ܘܬܬܛܡܪ ܒܐܪܥܐ. 'Addai: What should happen to a holy *ṭablīthā* which the Arabs have eaten meat upon and left stained with fat? Jacob: A *ṭablīthā* upon which the pagans have eaten is no longer therefore an altar. But rather, let it be washed well and polished and it will be for the simple use of the sanctuary or the diakonion. But if it is small and of infrequent use, let it be broken up and buried in the earth.' Syriac text also in Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 126, 128, but Mardin 310 is superior in one place. An alternate and shorter version of this is found in K.E. Rignell, ed. and trans., *A Letter from Jacob of Edessa to John the Stylite*, (Lund, 1979), pp. 61, 63.

[1114] See M. Richard and J.A Munitiz, edd., *Anastasii Sinaitae: Questiones et Responsiones* (Turnhout, 2006), p. 161 …θυσιαστήρια θεοῦ πάλιν καὶ τόπους τιμίους μολύνοντες…

[1115] See Nau, 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte),' p. 64.

priest and congregation were in the church. Rawḥ's sitting room overlooked the church and on Sundays, he would drink alcohol and watch the Christians in their liturgy beneath him.[1116] During the life of the East Syrian Mar Johannan (d. AD 692), we are told that an 'Ishmaelite leader' came and made his dwelling among the hovels of the monks at Mar Johannan's monastery. The saint asked the Arab to leave two times but, indignant, he refused. As a result, the saint cursed him; the Arab's wife then gave birth to 'two people that were in one body, stuck together,' i.e., Siamese twins. Humbled, the Arab asked Mar Johannan to give the order that the child die, lest he have shame before his friends and fellow tribesmen on its account. 'And with the word of that man of the Lord, Mar Johannan,' the *History of the Monastery of Sabrīshū'* continues, 'the body died and that Arab went quickly away.'[1117]

Rawḥ al-Qurashī was portrayed as recklessly irreverent in his behavior in a Christian church, but not all Muslims seem to have been so cavalier when it came to the Eucharist. Jacob of Edessa spoke of Muslims who took Eucharistic elements and brought them back from the land of the Greeks. Ultimately, their conscience led them to turn the host over to Jacob. He in turn restored it to the possession of Chalcedonians.[1118] What is important here is that Muslims had focused at all on the Eucharist as an item of value. The fact that they would take the trouble to remove the Eucharistic elements, transport them long distances, and then turn them over, presumably intact, to a member of the Christian clergy for reasons of conscience

1116 See I. Dick, 'La passion arabe de S. Antoine Ruwaḥ: néo-martyr de Damas († 25 déc. 799),' *Le muséon* 74 (1961), p. 119 (FT on p. 127). On the vocalization of Anthony's Arabic/pre-baptismal name Rawḥ and on his name in general, see S.K. Samir, 'Saint Rawḥ al-Qurašī: etude d'onomastique arabe et authenticité de sa passion,' *Le Muséon* 105 (1992), pp. 343-359.

1117 My translation. For the Syriac text, see A. Mingana, *Sources Syriaques* vol. 1, (Mosul, 1908), p. 199; (FT), pp. 247-248. cf. also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 210.

1118 Vööbus, ed., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition I* (CSCO 367: SS 161) pp. 243-244. (See n. 557 above).

suggests that Muslims, like Christians, viewed those elements as possessing distinct and special powers.

I will speak about this more in the next chapter, but Christian women were marrying Muslim men and this was no doubt a motor driving the hybridity of practices among adherents to the new Islamic religion. In a letter which perhaps dates from 684, Athanasios II of Balad decried Christian women who were 'unlawfully' and 'inappropriately' marrying 'pagan' men; the 'pagans' he was referring to may have in fact been Muslims. Christian men also come under Athanasios' censure in this letter: 'greedy slaves of the belly,' they were mixing with the pagans in their eating and, along with the women who were marrying pagan men, even eating of the pagans' sacrifices.[1119]

Once a Christian woman had married a Muslim, we find evidence that her husband might be concerned that she still had access to the Eucharist—another indication that Muslims viewed the Eucharist with importance. In the case of a Christian woman who marries a Hagarene of her own accord, Addai asked Jacob, is it

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[1119] Syriac text and FT in Nau, 'Littérature canonique syriaque inédite,' pp. 128-129: ܐܬܐ ܓܝܪ ܠܘܬ ܫܡܥܐ ܠܡܟܝܟܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܫܘܥܝܬܐ. ܕܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܫܪ̈ܚܐ ܡܢ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ. ܓܒܪ̈ܐ ܥܒܬ ܢܟ̈ܠܐ ܕܥܒ̈ܕܐ ܕܟܪܣܐ: ܗ̇ܘܝܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܝܐ ܕܠܐ ܒܗܘܢ ܡܬܚܠܛܝܢ ܥܡ ܚܢ̈ܦܐ ܒܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ ܕܐܒܝܕܐ. ܘܢܫ̈ܐ ܬܘܒ ܕܐܝܟܢ ܕܗܘ ܡܙܕܘܓܢ ܠܚܢ̈ܦܐ ܠܐ ܟܢܘܡܘܣܐܝܬ ܘܠܐ ܘܠܝܐܝܬ: ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܬ ܐܡܬܝ, ܕܐܟܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܦܘܠܓ ܡܢ ܕܒ̈ܚܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ. ܟܕ ܛܥܝܢ ܒܡܡܚܣܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܦܘܩܕ̈ܢܐ ܘܡܦܝ̈ܣܬܐ ܫܠܝܚܝܬܐ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܛܠ ܗܕܐ ܙܒܢ̈ܝܢ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܢ ܡܟܪܙܝܢ ܠܘܬ ܗ̇ܢܘܢ ܕܗܝܡܢܘ ܒܡܫܝܚܐ. ܕܢܬܪܚܩܘܢ ܡܢ ܙܢܝܘܬܐ ܘܡܢ ܕܚܢܝܩܐ ܘܡܢ ܕܡܐ. ܘܡܢ ܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ ܕܕܒ̈ܚܐ ܚܢܦ̈ܝܐ. ܐܝܟܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܗܘܘܢ ܒܝܕ ܗܕܐ ܫܘܬ̈ܦܐ ܠܫܐܕ̈ܐ. ܘܠܦܬܘܪܐ ܛܢܦܐ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ.. 'For an evil report has come to our humble hearing: namely, that dissolute people from among the Christians, greedy men who are slaves of the belly are mixing together with pagans in a way that befits one lacking discernment, and moreover that wretched women, in whatever way, are unlawfully and inappropriately married to pagans . All of them are at times eating without hesitation from their sacrifices, through their negligence forgetting the apostolic commandments and exhortations which for this reason have frequently proclaimed to those who have believed in Christ to distance themselves from fornication and from that which has been strangled and from blood and from the food of the sacrifices of pagans so they will not, by means of these things, become partakers of demons and their polluted table.' Cf. also the partial ET of this passage in Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Princeton, 1997), p. 148. NB: This heading of this text seems to indicate that it refers to Muslims and not to pagan polytheists, though this may be a later addition. See Hoyland's discussion of this issue in *idem*., *Seeing Islam*, pp. 148-149.

appropriate for priests to give her the Eucharist? If the woman's Muslim husband threatens to kill the priest if he does not give her the Eucharist, should he agree to give it to her for a time while the husband is seeking to have him killed, or is agreeing to give the Eucharist to such a person a sin? Would it be better for him to give her the Eucharist and she not become a Muslim and have her husband be a friend to the Christians? Jacob thought it was better to give such a woman the Eucharist than to have her convert to Islam.[1120]

Just as it seems to be the case that the threat of force was used to induce priests to give Christian wives of Muslim men the Eucharist, a threat of force also seems to have been used to motivate Christian priests to teach Muslim children. Is it appropriate, Addai asked Jacob, for a priest to teach the children of the Hagarenes who

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[1120] Mardin 310, fols. 213b-214a: ܐܕܝ، ܡܛܠ ܐܢܬܬܐ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܝܬܐ ܕܡܢ ܨܒܝܢܗ̇ ܗܘܝܐ ܠܗܓܪܝܐ: ܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܠܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܕܢܬܠܘܢ ܠܗ̇ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܘܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܗܕܐ. ܘܐܢ ܓܒܪ ܒܥܠܗ̇ ܥܠ ܟܗܢܐ ܕܢܩܛܘܠ ܠܗ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܝܗ̇ܒ ܠܗ̇ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܗ ܕܢܫܡܥ ܠܙܒܢܐ ܟܕ ܗ̣ܘ ܒܥܐ ܗܘ ܕܢܬܩܛܠ: ܐܘ ܕܢܫܡܥ ܘܢܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܚܛܗܐ. ܐܘ ܐܢ ܦܩܚ ܕܢܬܠ ܠܗ̇ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܗܘ ܗܓܪ. ܟܕ ܗ̣ܘ ܒܥܠܗ̇ ܪܚܡ ܗܘ ܠܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܠܟܠܗܘܢ ܦܘܫ̈ܟܝܟ ܕܒܫܘܐܠܬܐ ܗܕܐ. ܫܪܝܬ ܐܢܬ ܒܗܝ ܕܐܡܪܬ. ܕܐܢ ܘܠܐ ܕܢܬܝܗܒ ܠܗ̇ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ ܘܠܐ ܬܗܘ ܗܓܪ. ܡܛܠ ܗܢܐ ܕܠܐ ܬܗܘ ܗܓܪ. ܐܦܢ ܬܗܘܐ ܕܚܛܐ ܗܘܐ ܟܗܢܐ ܟܕ ܝܗ̇ܒ ܠܗ̇: ܘܐܦܢ ܠܐ ܓܒܪ ܗܘܐ ܒܥܠܗ̇. ܙܕܩ ܠܗ ܕܢܬܠ ܠܗ̇ ܩܘܪܒܢܐ. ܘܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗ ܚܛܗܐ ܡܛܠ ܕܝܗ̇ܒ ܠܗ̇: ܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܐܚܪܝܬܐ ܕܐܡܪܬ: ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܩܢܘܢܐ ܕܥܠ ܗܕܐ. ܗܟܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܕܒܪ. ܐܢ ܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܐܝܬ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܡܢܗ̇ ܕܚܢܦܘܬܐ: ܘܠܐ ܒܥܠܗ̇ ܓܒܪ. ܡܛܠ ܕܬܗܘܐ ܕܚܠܬܐ ܠܐܚܪ̈ܢܝܬܐ ܕܠܐ ܢܬܬܩ̈ܠܢ ܐܦ ܗ̇ܢ̈ܝܢ: ܘܡܛܠ ܒܡܪܕܘܬܗ̇ ܕܝܠܗ̇: ܒܗܢܐ ܕܡܬܚܙܝܐ ܠܫܠܝ̈ܛܢܐ ܕܡܫܟܚܐ ܕܬܣܝܒܪ. ܙܕܩ ܗܘ ܕܬܦܠ ܬܚܝܬ ܩܢܘܢܐ
'Addai: Concerning a Christian woman who of her own will marries a Hagarene: whether it is appropriate for priests to give her the Eucharist? And if there is a specific canon about this? And if her husband threatens to kill him if he does not give her the Eucharist, if it is right for him to agree for a time while he is seeking that he be killed, or whether for him to agree will be a sin for him? Or if it is better that he give her the Eucharist and she not become a Hagarene and have her husband be friendly to the Christians? Jacob: You have solved all your perplexities which are in this question with what you have said, namely, 'whether it is appropriate that the Eucharist be given to her and she not become a Hagarene.' On account of her not becoming a Hagarene—even if it means that the priest was sinning when he gave [it] to her, and even if her husband was not threatening—it is right for him to give her the Eucharist and he will not have a sin on account of giving to her. Now as for the last thing you said, namely, whether there is a specific canon concerning this, you should be guided in this way: if it is the case that there is no fear of apostasy, and her husband is not threatening, so that there be fear for other [women], that they too not stumble, and for the purpose of admonishing her, she should fall under the [punishment of the] canon so long as she seems to those in power able to bear it.' Cf. the ET in R. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 604-605.

have the authority to hurt him if he does not teach?[1121] Jacob saw no problem in this and indeed, noted that it might very well have beneficial results. These children may have been the product of marriages between Muslim men and Christian women, which would explain why a Muslim father would be keen to have his children taught by a Christian priest. Moreover, in the case of mixed Christian-Muslim marriages, it is not clear that the Muslim males had actually been born Muslim or whether they themselves were converts. In AD 779, for instance, the Caliph al-Mahdī forced 5,000 men of the Christian Arab tribe of Tanūkh to convert to Islam, but their wives continued to be Christians.[1122] One suspects that the type of Islam practiced by these men likely included the continuation of a number of practices and beliefs from their Christian past. Indeed, in the *Life* of Theodota, we are told of Theodota going up into his pulpit and ordering that money be given to help ransom captives. 'Our Lord was giving zeal to their hearts,' we are told, 'and they were fulfilling His commandment, Christians along with Hagarenes (*mhaggrāyē*).'[1123] Since the *Life* of Theodota usually refers to Arabs as *ṭayyāyē*, the use of *mhaggrāyē* here has led Andrew Palmer to suggest that the phrase refers to Christian converts to Islam.[1124] This would mean that we have

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[1121] Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 158: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܦܐܐ ܠܟܗܢܐ ܕܢܠܦ ܒܢ̈ܝ ܡܗܓܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܕܢܣܩܘܢܝܗܝ، ܐܢ ܠܐ ܡܠܦ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܥܡ ܗܝ ܕܐܢܢܩܐ ܡܦܣܐ ܠܗ ܐܦ ܠܗܢܐ. ܐܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܐܢܐ. ܕܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܬܚܒܠܐ ܗܘܐ ܠܗܘ ܕܡܠܦ: ܘܐܦ ܠܐ ܠܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܐܢ ܠܐ ܢܗܘܐ ܕܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܕܢܣܩܘܢ: ܡܛܠ ܕܡܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܠܝܢ. ܡܣܓܝ̈ܐܬܐ ܟܡܐ ܙܒܢܝ̈ܢ ܕܡܘܬܪ̈ܢ ܘܗܘ̈ܝܐ ܒܪ̈ܝܫ܀ 'Addai: If it is appropriate for a priest to teach the children of the Hagarenes who have the authority to injure him if he does not teach. Jacob: Along with the fact that necessity permits this person, I myself say that this does not hurt the one who teaches in any way, nor [does it hurt] the faith, nor would it if they did not have the power to cause harm, because from things such as these, how many times have a number of things which bring benefit come about?'

[1122] See J.-B. Chabot, ed. *Chronique de Michel le syrien, patriarche jacobite de Antioche (1166-1199)* (Paris, 1899-1910), vol. 4 (Syriac), pp. 478-479; vol. 3 (FT), p. 1.

[1123] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 557b (section 147 in my edition). Syriac text in Mardin 275/8, p. 554: ܘܝܗܒ ܗܘܐ ܡܪܢ ܛܢܢܐ ܠܠܒ̈ܘܬܗܘܢ. ܘܡܫܡܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܦܘܩܕܢܗ، ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܥܡ ܡܗܓܪ̈ܝܐ.

[1124] A. Palmer, 'The Garshūnī Version of the Life of Theodotos of Amida,' *Parole de l'Orient* 16 (1990-1991), p. 256, suggests that *mhaggrāyē* may mean 'those who have become sons of Hagar.' In other words, he believes that mhaggrāyē in this text 'means converts to Islam' since Muslims are referred to as

evidence for Christian renegades attending church services and following the orders of Christian leaders. Similarly, the *Life* also reports that 'Hagarenes (*mhaggrāyē*), heretics and the Orthodox feared [Theodota], and everything that he would command, they were receiving joyfully.'[1125]

To take stock for a moment, we have seen that Muslims showed a reverence for Christian holy men and sought them out for blessings, conversation, meal-companionship and healings. Moreover, they tried to obtain the blessings of Christian saints and the *ḥanānā* from these holy men. Muslims were interested in Christian churches, prayed there, attended Christian services there and turned some of them into mosques. Muslims—quite possibly former Christian converts—still seemed to regard Christian leaders as authority figures and would obey their orders and even apparently attend church. Such was the relationship of Muslim rulers to churches that some Christians even initially thought that the 'Abd al-Malik was building the Dome of the Rock as a Christian structure. Muslims showed a belief in the power of the Eucharist, going so far as to steal consecrated hosts from the Byzantine Empire and transport them back into Arab-controlled territory. Muslim men wanted their wives to be able to take communion, even to the point of using threats of force to make sure they were permitted. Muslims were also having their children educated by Christian priests.

ṭayyāyē (personal communication). See also, *idem*., ''Āmīd in the Seventh-Century Syriac Life of Theodūṭē,' in Emmanouela Grypeou, et al., *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 125-126, where he discusses this issue and writes, 'I shall preserve this uncertainty in translation by writing Muslims/converts to Islam.'

[1125] See St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 557b (section 148 in my edition). The Syriac text in Mardin 275/8, p. 555, is lacunose, and needs to be restored on the basis of the Karshūnī translation. The extant Syriac reads as follows: ...ܠܗ ܡܢ ܛܝ̈ܝܐ. ܘܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܛܝܩܘ. ܘܡܢ ܐܪ̈ܬܘܕܘܟܣܘ. ܘܟܠ ܕܦܩܕ ܗܘܐ ܡܩܒܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܚܕܘܬܐ

And there is still more. We have seen evidence in this early period for a fascination with and belief in the power of the Christian Eucharist. This was not the only major Christian symbol or figure which was valued among Muslims. When it came to the figure of Jesus, we find that the Islamic tradition preserved a number of Jesus' sayings, attributing them to Jesus himself.[1126] What's more, a number of sayings and parables of Jesus from the Gospels came to be attributed to Muḥammad himself in the *ḥadīth* literature.[1127] A number of Arabic inscriptions from late first to the late second century AH (the eighth century AD) in the Negev ask forgiveness from the 'Lord of Jesus,' the 'Lord of Jesus and Moses' and the 'Lord of Moses and Jesus;' one even refers to God as the 'Lord of Aaron and Jesus.'[1128] Baptism of Muslims was also not unknown. Rabban Khudhāwī had healed Mu'āwiya's daughter by baptizing her and, as we saw earlier, in the Ottoman period, it was very common for Muslims to have their children baptized by priests. There is no reason not to think that Muslims were having their children baptized from the earliest post-conquest period. By the middle of the twelfth century A.D., the Miaphysite Bishop John of Marde would issue a canon forbidding the

[1126] D. Cook, 'New Testament Citations in the Ḥadīth Literature and the Question of Early Gospel Translations into Arabic,' in E. Grypeou, M. Swanson and D. Thomas, eds., *The Encounter of Eastern Christianity with Early Islam* (Leiden/Boston, 2006), pp. 206-218.

[1127] See e.g., Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 2, pp. 346-356 and A. Guillaume, *The Traditions of Islam* (repr. New York, 1980), pp. 138-142.

[1128] Appeals are also made to the 'Lord of Moses,' and God is once called the 'Lord of Moses and Abraham' and once called 'Lord of Muḥammad and Abraham.' See the lists of prophets in inscriptions in Y.D. Nevo, Z. Cohen, and D. Heftman, *Ancient Arabic Inscriptions from the Negev*, vol. 1, (Jerusalem, 1993), pp. 141-142. There are references to 'Lord of Issa': MA 487(10), MA 489(10); 'Lord of Moses': MA 401D(07), MA 4114(12), MA 4137(12), MA 4168(13), MA 4271(19), MA 4293(21), MA 4293(21), MA 4295(21), MA 4342(22), MA 4428(23), MA 4501(25), MA 4509(25), MA 4513(25); 'Lord of Jesus and Moses': MA 4204A(14), MA 4340(22); 'Lord of Muḥammad and Abraham': HS 3155(06); 'God of Moses an Abraham': MM113(01); 'Lord of Moses and Jesus': MA 4210(16), MA 4269(19), MA 4467(24), MA 4508(25); MA 4516(26); 'Lord of Moses and Aaron': SC303(03), SC305(03), YA3112(05); and 'Aaron and Jesus': HL4900(27). See also, Cook, 'New Testament Citations in the Ḥadīth Literature,' p. 189 and R. G. Hoyland, 'The Content and Context of Early Arabic Inscriptions,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 21 (1997), pp. 78-79.

baptism of Muslim infants in the same laver as Christian infants. 'In the case of the children of Muslims,' John's canon stated,

> we carefully order you and speak to you with an apostolic commandment that there is no authority from God for priests to baptize them with the children of believers and in our holy font. Instead, let them have a different baptism, apart, on a different day, either before or after, in ordinary [i.e., non-consecrated] water.

Rather than a Christian baptism, John prescribed that Muslim children were to be given a different baptism, one for the remission of sins—what he called the 'baptism of John [the Baptist]':

> There shall only be for them a service of repentance, that is: a cycle and a prayer and a hymn of repentance, etc. Let the priest baptize the children of the Arabs as he says the following: I baptize this so-and-so in the name of the Lord with this baptism of John for the forgiveness of trespasses and the remission of sins. Amen. And let them anoint them with ordinary oil.[1129]

What we have here is an attempt to regulate and control what must have been a very widespread practice. At roughly the same time in Anatolia, it was common for Turks to have their children baptized, a practice which Balsamon reported.[1130]

One last major Christian symbol remains to be discussed: the cross. In later periods, there is a divergence between normative Islamic antipathy towards the cross and evidence of its use by Muslims for apotropaic purposes, and even with our scanty and problematic evidentiary base in this early period, we have some small pieces of information which suggest there was a spectrum of Muslim attitudes towards what is this perhaps most distinctive and divisive of all Christian symbols in the early 'Islamic'

[1129] My translation. A. Vööbus, ed. and trans., *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition II* (CSCO 375-376; SS 163-164) (Louvain, 1976), p. 246 (Syriac) and p. 259 (ET). I am grateful to David Taylor for bringing this passage to my attention.

[1130] See the evidence for Turkish Muslims being baptized, which was collected by Speros Vryonis, in *idem*., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the eleventh through the fifteenth century* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 487-489 (Balsamon quoted on pp. 487-489).

period. A story which appeared in Theophilos of Edessa's (d. AD 785) now-lost *Chronicle* connects at least one instance of Muslim hostility to the cross to Jewish sources: at some point in the early 640s, the Arabs were apparently (re-) building the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, but it fell down. 'The Jews said, "If you do not take down the cross that is set across from the Temple on the Mount of Olives, the Temple will not be built. When they took down the cross, the building rose up. By means of this cause, they took down many crosses.'[1131] This anecdote may be just another example of traditional Christian hostility towards Judaism,[1132] but it could also reflect a moment in the early post-conquest period where Muslim attitudes towards the Christian symbol of the Cross were still more fluid and ambivalent than they would be in later periods. Indeed, Christian Arab soliders fighting for Muslims in the seventh century were said to have marched into battle preceded by the cross and the banner of St Sergios.[1133]

If such a moment of openness, so to speak, towards the cross ever existed, it might help us understand some other pieces of evidence we have from the early period. In the examples I cited above, we have several instances of Christians displaying the cross prominently while Muslims were present or Christians using the sign of the cross in the course of healing a sick Muslim: Theodota restored the Muslim official's sight by making the sign of the cross over his eyes and invoking the name of Jesus; John of

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[1131] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, (Syriac) vol. 4, p. 421 = (FT) vol. 2, p. 431. ܘܒܗ ܒܙܒܢܐ ܗܢ. ܫܪܝܘ ܗܘܘ ܛܝܝܐ ܠܡܒܢܐ ܠܗܝܟܠܐ ܕܫܠܝܡܘܢ ܒܐܘܪܫܠܡ. ܢܦܠ ܗܘܐ ܒܢܝܢܐ. ܘܐܡܪܘ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܐܢ ܠܐ ܠܗ ܠܨܠܝܒܐ ܕܩܝܡ ܠܩܘܒܠ ܗܝܟܠܐ ܒܛܘܪܐ ܕܙܝܬܐ ܠܐ ܡܫܬܠܡ ܐܬܒܢܝܘ. ܠܐ ܡܬܒܢܝܐ ܗܝܟܠܐ. ܘܟܕ ܐܚܬܘ ܠܗ ܠܨܠܝܒܐ ܩܡ ܒܢܝܢܐ. ܘܒܗܕܐ ܗܪܐ ܥܠܬܐ ܨܠܝ̈ܒܐ ܣܓܝ̈ܐܐ ܐܚܬܘ ܗܘܘ. In his reconstruction of Theophilos of Edessa's now-lost *Chronicle* ('the Syriac Common Source'), Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 640-641, places this event in the early 640s.

[1132] See, e.g. the story in Theophanes where a Jewish 'magician' tells Yazīd that destroying Christian icons throughout his realm will result in his reigning for forty years and thereby persuades him to do so. See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 555.

[1133] For this, see H. Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Mo'awiya I^er^,' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 299.

Daylam used a cross to make the sign of the cross over the head over ‘Abd al-Malik’s son who was ill; Arabs were present and celebrating at the Patriarch Julian II’s entry into Amid, a celebration where there were many crosses present. Perhaps most notable was Mu‘āwiya’s decision, upon being made Caliph, to go and pray at Golgotha and Gethsemane. It would be difficult to imagine two places more closely associated with the crucifixion of Jesus, an event that Muslims famously deny and which the cross points to.[1134] According to the same *Maronite Chronicle*, however, only a few months later in the same year, 41 AH/660 AD, Mu‘āwiya tried to mint gold and silver coins without crosses on them, but this omission meant that people refused to use them.[1135] Arab-Byzantine coins that displayed crosses on them, even when sometimes also bearing affirmations of the prophethood of Muḥammad, reflected the ideological tension in Mu‘āwiya’s two acts.[1136] As Clive Foss has pointed out, however, an official Greek inscription in the baths at Hammat Gader, rebuilt under Mu‘āwiya in 662, is preceded by a cross and contains Mu‘āwiya’s name. Muslims used these baths and it is not improbable that Mu‘āwiya himself visited there as well: ‘In other words, public display of the cross was not incompatible with the official life of the Umayyad state.’[1137] With this said, one of the main contentions of this chapter is that we should not confuse the official public life of a state or the religious ideology promoted by a

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[1134] See R. Stephen Humphreys’ discussion of this event in his *Mu‘awiya ibn Abi Sufyan: From Arabia to Empire*, (Oxford, 2006), p. 84.

[1135] See Palmer et al., *The Seventh Century in the West-Syrian Chronicles*, p. 32.

[1136] See C. Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins: An Introduction, with a Catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection* (Cambridge, Mass, 2008), pp. 117-118 for a discussion of the ideological tension represented by crosses appearing on Islamic coins and *ibid*., p. 63 for a coin bearing a cross as well as an Arabic inscription reading ‘Muḥammad, the Prophet of God.’

[1137] Foss, *Arab-Byzantine Coins*, p. 118. For the inscription in question, see Y. Hirschfeld, *The Roman Baths of Hammat Gader: Final Report* (Jerusalem, 1997), pp. 238-240.

theological elite with the lived religious life of the overwhelming majority of society and perhaps even members of the elite as well.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, we will never have the sort of rich documentation about religious life and attitudes in the early medieval period that scholars of the Ottoman era or even high Middle Ages possess. Nevertheless, we do have hints and clues that many of the same phenomena of religious hybridity that we have abundant documentation for in those later periods were also occurring in the earliest 'Islamic' period as well. If, rather than thinking of Christianity in heavily doctrinal terms, we think of it in terms of an adherence to particular symbols and rituals and belief in the power of certain individuals, it becomes quickly clear that attitudes, at least among some parts of the Muslim population, towards Christian holy men, churches, the Eucharist, Baptism, Jesus and perhaps even the cross, in the early centuries of Islam were such that one could join the new Islamic religious community and yet give up little of what one had previously been committed to on a religious level. This is especially true since, as I have tried to suggest, the level of religious knowledge among the mass of Muslims, most of whom became Muslim through group conversions, was not very high, nor had the institutions and texts which eventually became sources of normativity in Islam crystallized, or in some cases, even been born.

We should be careful, too, not to let our understanding of the ideological ease of moving into Islam for Christians be obscured by the sources we have which tend to valorize and champion individuals who refused to convert, or who came back to Christianity once they had converted. Such individuals are exceptions that prove the

rule. The long-term religious demographic trend of the region shows that they were in quite a small minority in terms of their attitude towards conversion. Anastasios of the Sinai, for instance, describes in a few lines the unsuccessful attempt of local Arab Christians to fight off 'Saracen' invaders at Mt Sinai in the middle part of the seventh century; when it became clear that they could not hold off the mass of Muslims, they made a treaty with them and 'believed with them,' i.e., became Muslims.

Anastasios, however, focuses most of his attention on the one Arab Christian there who sought to flee through a precipitous and dangerous area 'choosing rather for himself the death of the body than to give up the faith of Christ and be in spiritual danger.' Before he could flee, the man's wife stopped him, weeping, and pleaded with him 'in the Arabic language' to offer her and their children up as sacrifices to God like Abraham rather than let them stay and fall into the hands of 'these wolves.' Before his flight, therefore, the man took out a sword and kills his wife and children rather than let them be forced to convert to Islam.[1138]

The dramatic nature of such a story should not distract us from what is most historically significant in the narrative: all the other Arab Christians apparently did convert upon their capitulation to the Muslim army. In Michael the Syrian's account of the forced conversion of 5,000 Christian Arabs from the tribe of Tanūkh only one—a man named Layth—suffered martyrdom.[1139] We have no solid evidence as to what Islam would have meant or looked like to such Christian converts (or indeed, for the members of the Muslim army they fought), but my argument has been that very little actually changed for them religiously once they did become Muslims. One wonders just

[1138] Greek text in Nau, 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte),' pp. 87-88. French summary available in *idem*., 'Les récits inédits du moine Anastase,' p. 129-132.

[1139] *Chronique de Michel le syrien* : vol. 4 (Syriac), pp. 478-479; vol. 3 (FT), p. 1.

what their Islam looked like once the Caliph and his army moved along; like the *mhaggrāyē* in the *Life* of Theodota who apparently attended church and who joined Miaphysite and other Christians in joyfully following the holy man's commandments, did they hold to many of their previous Christian ways?

To be sure, later in the Middle Ages, once various competing systems of Muslim doctrine and law had been elaborated and codified, the change from Islam to Christianity was perhaps more marked, but even here we should not be blind to the tremendous role Islam's status as a new and minority religion existing among more ancient and sophisticated religions and the influx of converts from these religions played in shaping the elaboration of its classical form. The various challenges represented by the sheer presence of demographic super-majorities of non-Muslims in post-conquest early 'Islamic' societies are the Dark Matter of the early medieval Middle Eastern universe that historians need to take into account if they are to truly understand and explain the eventual shape Islam came to have. If we do not take seriously the question of how Muslims related to and appropriated the cultural traditions of the large conquered populations they found themselves ruling over by the middle part of the seventh century, our narrative and understanding of early medieval Middle Eastern and Islamic history will be depressingly familiar and predictable: quarrels and battles over conquest booty and succession between different interest groups within a small conquering elite who were concentrated in only a handful of places—one's mental map of the Middle East is essentially reduced to Medina, Damascus, Kufa, Basra, and perhaps Khurasan.

But the amount of attention such events and place receive is seductively misleading. 'The total number of Arabs who left their homes can hardly have exceeded, or even totaled, five hundred thousand,' Patricia Crone has written of the period after the conquests in the Middle East. 'The conquered peoples numbered perhaps twenty to thirty million.'[1140]

The goal of my final chapter will be to attempt to make this silent majority speak.

[1140] P. Crone, 'The Early Islamic World,' in K. Raaflaub and N. Rosenstein, eds., *War and Society in the Ancient and Medieval World: Asia, the Mediterranean, Europe, and Mesoamerica* (Washington, DC, 1999), p. 314. Claude Cahen suggests that in the seventh century perhaps 100,000 and no more than 200,000 Arabs occupied 'most of the territory between the Hind[u] Kush and the Atlas Mountains.' See *idem*., 'Socio-Economic History and Islamic Studies: Problems of Bias in the Adaptation of the Indigenous Population to Islam,' trans. P. Ditchfield in R. Hoyland, ed., *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 264 (a translation of the original article by Cahen, 'Histoire economic-sociale et islamologie: le problem prejudicial de l'adaptation entre les autochtones et l'Islam,' *Correspondence d'Orient* (Brussels, 1961), pp. 197-215.

Chapter 12: Rubbing Shoulders: A Shared World

'We must therefore read the great canonical texts, and perhaps also the entire archive of modern and pre-modern European and American culture, with an effort to draw out, extend, give emphasis and voice to what is silent or marginally present or ideologically represented...' Edward Said[1141]

Textbooks and undergraduate courses on medieval Middle Eastern history begin with an obligatory nod in the direction of the Late Antique period: general information about the Byzantines and Sassanians, mention of the brutal and grinding Last Great War of Antiquity which weakened both powers and left them open to attack at their soft southern underbelly, perhaps some discussion of Zoroastrianism and a schematic typology of the different flavors of Christianity in the region which focuses primarily on the number of natures each group ascribed to the Incarnate Christ, not infrequently mangling the theological subtleties at play in the process. After these genuflections before Late Antiquity, this background setting is quietly pushed off stage and with it, the overwhelming majority of the population of the region, whose historical voice is effectively silenced. Now considered 'minorities,' their voices are henceforth only to be heard by those with ears to hear in specialist journals and publications which focus on 'Christian' Arabic or Syriac and which are usually theological or philological in orientation. Meanwhile, the study of Zoroastrianism and Middle Persian takes place in but a handful of locations globally and Jewish studies, for its part, all-too-often operates as a separate field and in a parallel universe.

In other words, an entire world goes gently into that good night. In its place, the focus of standard narratives of Middle Eastern history shifts nearly exclusively to (Muslim) Arabs and the politics of Islam. We find ourselves walking over the same

[1141] E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993), p. 66.

familiar ground: debates about who got what portion of the spoils of conquest and which tax breaks, murder, infighting and civil wars among the leaders of the small new religious polity. There are attempts—sometimes unfortunately apologetic—at writing about the beginnings of one sectarian group or another and usually involving confusing, competing precedence claims based on the family tree of Muḥammad's extended clan. Then there are the debates as to what, if anything, we can or should really believe in the Arabic sources that report these various political, religious, military and familial conflicts, sources which, at least in the form we now have them, were mostly written down several centuries after the events they purport to describe. Whether historians choose to offer their readers what amount to (more or less) credulous English translations of medieval Arabic sources, or whether they attempt to offer (more or less) fanciful reconstructions as to what really happened in the seventh century or what Islam really meant in its early period, the results all bear a similar Arabo- and Islamo-centric emphasis. And, once the Arab conquests have happened, when non-Muslims do re-appear in narratives of Middle Eastern history, they do so in a partitioned-off, ghettoized fashion: in asides or special chapters which are devoted to 'minorities' and their treatment under Islamic law. This, despite the fact that the use of such post-Enlightenment, nation-state language in the medieval period is both anachronistic[1142] and simply wrong, for the non-Muslim population of the Middle East was demographically a majority and not a minority.[1143]

[1142] cf. T. el-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo, 1293-1524 A.D.,' p. 27, esp. n. 71.

[1143] If we accept Richard Bulliet's estimate in his *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, MA/London, 1979), Syria became majority Muslim at some point around the year 275 AH/AD 888) (p. 109). Bulliet's information, however, should not be seen as reliable because of its methodological flaws. Apart from the urban and elite bias of its sources in a world where

This near-instantaneous shift in focus from the majority to the minority in Middle Eastern history occurs for a variety of reasons. It happens in part because the field of Middle Eastern history—from undergraduate courses, to academic jobs, to scholarly conferences, to book series put out by major university presses—is periodized based on a tacit assumption: medieval Middle Eastern history is the same as Islamic history. Such an assumption, though teleological, sectarian, misleading and reductionistic, is of course not surprising. We do not date historical epochs or design undergraduate survey courses on the basis of the era of Zoroaster or Mani, as important as these figures may have been to large numbers of people in the Late Antique and medieval worlds, for the simple reason that the contemporary influence of these figures is minimal. Today Muslims form the overwhelming majority of the Middle East and Arabic is the language which dominates the region—and all history, it has been observed, is a history of the present. The temptation, especially when there is

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the overwhelming majority of the population was rural (A. Walmsley estimates that more than 80% of Syria's population lived in rural settlements, see *idem*., *Early Islamic Syria: An Archaeological Assessment* (London, 2007), p. 72), Bulliet's use of Islamic names as indicators of conversion in biographical dictionaries ignores the fact that we know from medieval sources that Christians were in fact taking Muslim names. This is suggested by the clause in the so-called 'Pact of 'Umar' (in Arabic, *shurūṭ 'Umariyya*, 'conditions of 'Umar,') where people of the book pledge that they will not take the *kunya*s of Muslims. In the high Middle Ages, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH/AD 1350) offered a typology of three different kinds of names in his exposition of the *shurūṭ 'Umariyya*: names specific to Muslims (e.g., Muḥammad, Aḥmad, Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr), names specific to infidels (e.g., George, Peter, John, Matthew), and shared names (e.g., Yaḥyā, 'Īsā, Ayyūb, Dāwūd, Sulaymān, Zayd, 'Abd Allāh, 'Aṭiyya, Mawhūb, Salām, and even though he also lists it as being only for Muslims, 'Umar). See Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, vol. 2, (Beirut, 1995), pp. 186-188. One could also point to *aḥādīth* which focused on the question of the propriety of giving a non-Muslim a *kunya* as evidence for the fact that Muslims were doing precisely this; for a collection of such *ḥadīth* see 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf* , vol. 6 (Beirut, 1983), pp. 122-123. The suspicion that a clause in the *shurūṭ 'Umariyya*, *ḥadīth* on this topic and a typology such as that of Ibn al-Qayyim's suggests that Christians were in fact taking Muslim names is confirmed elsewhere: in his *Answer to the Christians*, al-Jahiz complains that Christians have taken the names al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusayn, al-'Abbās, al-Faḍl and 'Alī, 'it only remains for them to be named Muḥammad and have the kunya "Abū al-Qāsim."' See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1344), p. 18. Ibn al-Qayyim, too, complained that in his time Christians (and Jews) were taking Muslim *kunya*s like Abū 'l-'Alā', Abū 'l-Faḍl and Abū 'l-Ṭayyib and names like Ḥasan and Ḥusayn and 'Uthmān and 'Alī. See *Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimma* (Beirut, 1995), vol. 2, p. 189. For further criticism of Bulliet's methodology, see el-Leithy, 'Coptic Culture and Conversion in Medieval Cairo,' pp. 21-22.

a need to convince a funding body to award a grant in the picture, is to pick out those aspects of the past which are of the most interest to people who are alive today. The reality that much of the population of the Middle East for much of the Middle Ages was not in fact Muslim, that Arabic was one of a number of different literary languages in use there at that time, and that those inhabitants of the Middle East who would have called themselves Muslim did not adhere to a form of Islam that would have borne a strong resemblance to the scripturalist forms of the religion which attract the lion's share of scholarly attention today, are all things which are easily missed if we allow the subject matter and focus of Arabic sources, often normative, to color our own historical interests and blind us to other narratives and dynamics at work in the region.

To be fair, Islamicists have been aided and abetted by Byzantinists in the construction of such a distorted picture of the early medieval Middle East: narratives of decline and contraction in the Byzantine world make it easy to think that when the Arabs rode in in the seventh century what they encountered was a diminished and reeling society, a shell of its former self. The same can be said for kinder, gentler narratives of transformation, which maintain the same focus on the changes in urban culture as proponents of decline do but employ less pejorative and emotive language to describe essentially the same phenomena. It would be simplistic to say that these conflicting historiographies can be boiled down to a battle over which adjectives to use. But perhaps only just. Their end result is essentially the same: When Herakleios retreats from Syria, famously bidding it farewell, and large numbers of Greek-speaking

elites flee with him,[1144] we are left to feel that the Emperor was in effect taking the last pieces of tarnished silver and chipped china from the cultural cabinet of a region which was exhausted from warfare, the plague and earthquakes, a rickety car driving erratically under the influence of Christianity and ticketed for the offense of no longer producing the sorts of texts that many modern scholars like to read. We stand before a now-empty region which has just formatted the hard drive of the past half millennium; the abandoned properties of these (Greek-speaking) elites are filled literally and figuratively by a new-elite, speaking a new language, following a new system of beliefs.

The notion of decline, contraction and even transformation in Byzantium thus functions as a Byzantine analogue to the Islamic notion of *jāhiliyya*, and with the seventh century seen as a cultural low point, such notions quickly become historiographic enablers for Islamo-centric accounts of medieval Middle Eastern history, rendering the region an empty husk to be filled with new contents produced by vigorous historical actors in the form of conquering Arabs. Ultimately, scholars themselves re-enact the narratives they have constructed for the seventh and eighth centuries, with Byzantine studies retreating from the Middle East alongside the army of Herakleios and Islamicists riding in with the Arabs.[1145] Once they have left the Middle East, Byzantinists only return to the region riding on the back of Greek sources in the context of the reconquests of the tenth century, or to write about Arab-Byzantine relations, or perhaps the Crusades. In effect, what had been among the wealthiest and

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[1144] On the flight of Greek-speaking city dwellers from Syria after the Arab conquests, see F. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 245-249. For such flight as exceptional, see C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400-800* (Oxford, 2005), p. 241.

[1145] A while after I wrote this, I realized that it bears resemblance to comments made by P. Crone in her *Roman, provincial and Islamic Law: The Origins of the Islamic patronate* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 17. I read the relevant passage by Crone years ago and may have been subconsciously channeling it as I wrote, but cannot be sure.

culturally most important regions of the Empire lose their Byzantine bona fides once they are no longer under the political control of Constantinople. And it is not only their Byzantine bona fides that they lose—it is almost as if they slough off their entire Christian populations. Syria and Egypt (along with the Balkans) had provided perhaps as much as three-fourths of the Byzantine Empire's tax revenue and contained two-thirds of its landmass,[1146] these two had witnessed the birth of Christianity, its earliest expansion and contained its most ancient communities, including three of the five churches in the so-called 'Pentarchy,' had provided a number of the most significant theologians of the patristic period and yet, after the Arab conquests they, for all intents and purposes, fall off the radar screen of most histories of Christianity and now stand suddenly as strangers to the Byzantine world. It is often easy to forget that John of Damascus, the most important theologian in the Iconoclast Era and one of the greatest theologians in the (Chalcedonian) Orthodox tradition never set foot in the Byzantine Empire, was an Arabic speaker and spent his life under Umayyad rule, or that Maximos the Confessor, according to his earliest biography, was from Palestine, or that the seventh and eighth centuries saw a number of Syrian popes.[1147]

'The most dramatic effects of Islamic expansion clearly lay in the East,' Judith Herrin wrote in an important book, 'where the number of Christians in the ancient pentarchy of five patriarchates (the oldest centres in the Mediterranean) declined rapidly.' When we arrive at the late eighth century, Herrin observed that 'for the first

[1146] See C. Wickham, *The Inheritance of Rome: Illuminating the Dark Ages* (New York, 2009), p. 259. Also see Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, p. 10 (relying M.F. Hendy, *Studies in the Byzantine Monetary Economy c. 300-1450* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 625.)

[1147] See the list of Popes and their places of origin in D. Sladen, *How to See the Vatican* (New York, 1914), p. xx: John V (685-686, from Antioch), Sisinnius (708, Syria), Constantine (708-715, Syria), Gregory III (731-741, Syria). Sergius I (687-701) was from Palermo, but his father had been from Antioch (see A.J. Ekonomou, *Byzantine Rome and the Greek Popes: Eastern Influences on Rome and the Papacy from Gregory the Great to Zacharias, A.D. 590-752* (Lanham, MD, 2007), p. 223).

time, the Christians who lived in the West probably outnumbered their brethren in the older centres of the East. While these numbers cannot be calculated, the scale of some of the western monastic foundations and the vast, though thinly populated areas brought into the faith imply a considerable increase. By whatever criterion we attempt to measure this growth, it must stand in marked contrast to the evident decrease of Christian observance in the East Mediterranean.'[1148] Herrin's comments are notable for several reasons. First is their remarkably uncontroversial nature: she simply makes explicit the assumptions about the religious composition of the Middle East after the Islamic conquest which are commonly shared by Byzantinists, church historians and Islamicists alike, even if they are not quite so consciously articulated. The numerical decline and, moreover, decay, in the Middle East's Christian population during the first centuries of Muslim occupation, it is presumed, was swift and self-evident. Second, Herrin's statements are notable because she provides no footnotes or evidence whatsoever to substantiate such strong demographic and qualitative claims relating to the populations of these, the most ancient centers of Christianity. Nor does she provide any evidence for Muslim demographic ascendancy at this point.

Herrin is of course not alone in making such broad assertions on the basis of minimalist substantiation—no scholar before her (or after) has provided any evidence for such claims, though, as I have just stated, these claims and the assumptions underlying them are commonplaces. This is because, apart from Bulliet's valiant but flawed attempts at extrapolating broader population trends in Syria on the basis of a methodology built on the (heavily-urban) evidence of Iranian biographical dictionaries,

[1148] J. Herrin, *The Formation of Christendom* (London, 1987), pp. 300, 303.

there simply is no evidence for Christian decline to be offered. To the contrary, in the first part of this dissertation, I attempted to show that we have many reasons to believe that a flourishing provincial culture of scholarship existed in the Middle East, one in which philosophical, medical and historical texts continued to be written by Christians there before, during and well after both the Byzantine 'Dark Age' and the Arab conquests. The fact that much of this literature was written in Syriac and that much of it is now lost or, if not lost, then remains understudied and indeed, unpublished, has contributed to our distorted understanding of post-conquest Syria, as has the nature of the Arabic source material, which easily misleads. But we should always keep in mind that the production of a large amount of literature, religious and non-, in Arabic starting in the ninth century, as well as the adoption of a more explicitly Islamic political ideology by the rulers of the Middle East beginning in the late seventh century can point to a number of things: the increasing importance of the new religion in legitimating rule, the growing self-awareness of various competing parts of the Muslim community and their attempts to narrate identity in ways that would legitimate their positions and delegitimate those of others, rivalry with the Christian East Romans, not to mention rivalry with indigenous Christians now living under minority Muslim rule. None of these factors, however, necessitates a marked and rapid decline in Christian population or Islamic numeric hegemony in the Middle East. It only takes a moment's reflection to realize that there is no obvious and necessary connection between the size of a religious community and the volume of literature that its adherents produce.[1149]

[1149] I am grateful to Peter Brown for suggesting third- and fourth-century Christianity in the still overwhelmingly non-Christian Roman Empire as an example of this.

With Byzantinists evacuating the Middle East after the seventh century and Islamicists focusing on the political intrigues and protean beliefs of the region's ruling Arab minority, the mass of the population who was still living there and who did not flee with Herakleios and who did not convert to Islam and begin to speak Arabic once they found themselves under Arab political authority is left in silence, with only the occasional Islamicist to try to speak for it outside the small, specialized and heavily-theological parallel universe of Eastern Christian and Christian Arabic studies. These people, those who stayed, essentially fall through the cracks of our histories: they are not Byzantines, they are not Arabs (at least many of them were not), they are not Muslims. What can we call them? Syrian Christians? Middle Eastern Christians? There is not even a standard scholarly convention for referring to them. Whatever they were, whatever we call them, we should not forget that they were the large majority whose gradual Islamization and Arabization were as important for the shape that the Middle East and Islam eventually took as any events which may or may not have actually happened in the seventh-century Hijaz. Because we lack a recognized and established category to place them in, however, they vanish from most scholarly radar screens.

This dissertation has been an attempt at writing part of the history of those that stayed, for the history of the early Medieval Middle East is not the same as the history of the Muslim minority who ruled it. Indeed, to try to understand that minority apart from the sea of non-Muslims in which it lived is a fundamentally misguided effort. We need to re-adjust our thinking in this period and realize that the church was not, as one recent book has put it, in the shadow of the mosque, but rather the mosque was in the

shadow of the church, or better yet, churches.[1150] This is certainly how at least some medieval Muslims viewed the matter, too. The medieval geographer al-Maqdisī (d. AH 380/AD 990?)[1151] offers the following anecdote about the motivations in building the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem:

> Now, talking to my father's brother one day said I: 'O my uncle, surely it was not fitting for al-Walīd to expend the resources of the Muslims on the mosque at Damascus. Had he expended as much in building roads, or the water tanks, or in repairing the fortresses, it would have been more proper and more to his credit.' Said he: 'You simply do not understand, my dear son. Al-Walīd was absolutely right, and it was open to him to do a worthy work. For he saw that Syria was a country settled by the Christians, and he noted there their churches so handsome with their enchanting decorations, renowned far and wide, such as are the Qumāma,[1152] and the churchs of Ludd (Lydda) and al-Ruhā [Edessa]. So he undertook for the Muslims the building of a mosque that would divert their attention from the churches, and make it one of the wonders of the world. Do you not realize how 'Abd al-Malik, seeing the greatness of the dome of the Qumāma and its splendour, fearing lest it should beguile the hearts of the Muslims, hence erected, above the Rock, the dome you now see there?[1153]

At the end of my previous chapter I referred to this oft-invisible non-Muslim population as the Dark Matter of early medieval Middle Eastern history: it must have been everywhere, but more often than not, in part because of the sources we possess and in part because of the way we read those sources and the questions and

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[1150] cf. S. Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque: Christians and Muslims in the World of Islam* (Princeton/Oxford, 2008).

[1151] See S. Miquel's article, 'al-Muḳaddasī , Shams al-Dīn Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Bannā' al-Shāmī,' in *EI*[2].

[1152] i.e., the *Qiyāma*, or Church of the Resurrection (Anastasis). For the Muslim practice of referring to the Church of the Resurrection (*Kanīsat al-qiyāma*) as the *Qumāma* (='Dunghill') see K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture: Umayyads, Early 'Abbāsids & Ṭūlūnids. Part One: Umayyads. AD 622-750* (Oxford, 1932), p. 24.

[1153] Translation B.A. Collins, p. 146 in al-Muqaddasi, *The Best Divisions for Knowledge of the Regions. A Translation of* Ahsan al-Taqasim fi Ma'rifat al-Aqalim, (Reading, 1994). For this quote, see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, p. 101. Theophanes, for his part, perhaps reflecting the now-lost *Chronicle* of Theophilos of Edessa, saw al-Walīd's actions as coming from a similar motivation of religious competition, but portrayed them more negatively: 'In this year [AD 706-707],' he wrote, 'Oualid seized the most holy cathedral of Damascus. The wretched man did this out of envy of the Christians, because this church was surpassingly beautiful.' See Trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 524. For the treatment of churches and monasteries, see the evidence amassed in A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of 'Umar* (London, 1930), pp. 37-60.

assumptions we bring to them, we simply do not see it. This is the case because Islamic sources written in Arabic and Christian sources written in Arabic, Syriac, Greek and other languages present the historian with a problem of incommensurables: is it possible to make these bodies of material talk to one another, especially when they often seem to be operating in different worlds?

Van Ess compared the situation in the early 'Islamic' period to a '"levantine" city like Beirut': 'Different communities live together, they deal with each other, they do business with each other, they do the administration and—today—even politics together, but they never talk to each other about their religion and consequently they are to an astonishing degree ignorant of what their neighbors believe.'[1154] Cook showed long ago that van Ess's model was inadequate, that there was indeed much talking and debate going on among Christians, Muslims and Jews,[1155] and in this, my final chapter, I am interested in picking up where Cook left off, for it is van Ess-like assumptions that underlie the entire way in which the history of the Middle East is organized, studied and taught in the modern Western world; it is only if we assume that the medieval Middle East operated like van Ess's modern Levantine city, with members of religious groups sealed off from one another, that we can justify banishing the region's non-Muslim majority to boutique publications and special aside chapters devoted to the sorts of clothing, belts and taxes these 'minorities' were supposed to wear and pay

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[1154] J. van Ess, 'The Beginnings of Islamic Theology,' in J.E. Murdoch and E.D. Sylla, eds., *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning. Proceedings of the First International Colloquium on Philosophy, Science and Theology in the Middle Ages* (Dordrect/Boston, 1975), p. 100.

[1155] See M. Cook, 'The Origins of "*Kalām*,"' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1981), pp. 41-42.

according to normative legal sources whose connection to actual practice and lived experience is assumed rather than proven.[1156]

Cook corrected Van Ess as part of an important article in which he demonstrated that the form Muslim *kalām* took was a direct borrowing from pre-Islamic Christian styles of theological argumentation: he took what is perhaps the oldest-known example of *kalām* we have (the *Questions* of al-Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafiyya (d. ca. 100 AH/AD 718)), a text which already displayed the distinctive, aporetic style of questioning employed in Muslim disputation, and showed that this style of dilemma-based questioning was characteristic of an entire genre of Christian theological works which had nothing to do with Islam and indeed, which were being written before Muḥammad received his first revelation. The similarities in genre between the Christian texts and the later Islamic texts were simply too striking to be coincidence.[1157] Scholars may quibble about the use of a word like 'borrowing' and prefer instead to use other less provocative phrases like 'appropriation' or 'absorption,' or to speak rather in terms of Muslims continuing a pre-Islamic tradition of dialectical dispute.[1158] At a certain level, however, such word games are immaterial for my present task: I am not interested in projects of religious, cultural or civilizational

[1156] Note the complaints of al-Jāḥiẓ that many Christians have left off wearing the *zunnār* and that others were wearing it without wearing the type of clothing that Christians, as people of the Book, were supposed to be dressed in, and moreover, that many wealthy Christians were refusing to pay the *jizya*. See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1344), p. 18.

[1157] See M. Cook, 'The Origins of "*Kalām*,"' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 43 (1981), pp. 32-43 and *idem*., *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-critical Study* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 156-157. See also my article, "Between Christology and Kalām? The Life and Letters of George, Bishop of the Arab Tribes," pp. 671-716, in *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone*: *Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock*, ed. G. Kiraz, (Piscataway, NJ, Gorgias Press, 2008).

[1158] For an example of an essay which focuses on what one might called nomenclature or procedural framing of the question of the relationship between Islam and older religions, see M. Pregill, 'The Hebrew Bible and the Quran: The Problem of the Jewish "Influence" on Islam,' *Religion Compass* 1/6 (2007), pp. 643-659.

(de)legitimation through the establishment of etiological precedence or purity: only Athena sprang fully-formed from the head of Zeus, without, as it were, any human fingerprints or historical genealogy. What I am interested in is the sheer fact that a cultural practice which existed before the Islamic conquests and indeed, before the birth of Muḥammad, reappeared in the Arab period in Islamic garb, speaking Arabic, as it were, and being used by Muslims; eventually, it came to be seen as being Islamic to the extent that Cook's discovery of an unmistakable pre-Islamic ancestor for it could count as a discovery at all—the pre-Islamic pedigree had been lost and forgotten.

This particular continuity—in the form that *kalām* took—is but one of a myriad of continuities between the pre- and post-conquest periods. In swallowing up the Middle East, the Arabs also ingested and took over a great deal of the cultural furniture which was there when they arrived and historians have suggested any number of such continuations of previous, pre-Islamic practices in the Islamic period. An incomplete list of these might include the following:

More on *kalām*: before Cook showed that the disjunctive, aporetic style of *kalām* texts was clearly characteristic of pre-Islamic, Christian theology, Pines pointed out that the standard order in which medieval treatises on *kalām* took up different doctrinal subjects bore a striking resemblance to the order of arrangement of the *De Fide Orthodoxa* of John of Damascus and suggested that, just as this important text established a pattern of organization that was eventually to be followed in Latin scholastic theology, it also served as the model for later *kalām*; Pines also suggested that specific Muʻtazilī doctrines regarding divine unity and free will were, in the former

case, a direct reaction against Christian theology and in the latter, an appropriation and expansion of it;[1159]

Jesus: in my last chapter, I referred to the fact that a large number of sayings from the Gospels have found their way into Islamic literature; here, I will echo Tarif Khalidi's observation that the corpus of Jesus material in Islamic literature—what Khalidi refers to as the 'Muslim gospel'—represents 'the largest body of texts relating to Jesus in any non-Christian literature;'[1160] Khalidi collected more than three hundred sayings and stories attributed and connected to Jesus in the Islamic tradition, from the second through twelfth centuries AH (eighth-eighteenth centuries AD);[1161] and it is important to remember that in addition to this material which is attributed to Jesus, dozens of examples of sayings of Jesus from the Gospels can be found throughout Islamic literature attributed to Muḥammad, some other Muslim figure, or an unnamed mystic or wise man;[1162] the Lord's Prayer is even found attributed to Muḥammad in Islamic literature;[1163] related to this is the entry into the Islamic religious vocabulary of Christian theological terms: Goldziher, for example, showed that the use of the word

[1159] For these points, see S. Pines, 'Some traits of Christian Theological Writing in Relation to Moslem *Kalām* and Jewish Thought,' pp. 79-99, in S. Stroumsa, ed., *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines*, vol. 3, *Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy* (Jerusalem, 1996).

[1160] See T. Khalidi, ed. and trans., *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge, MA/London, 2001), p. 3.

[1161] They are collected and translated in his *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature* (Cambridge, MA/London, 2001). M. Asín y Palacios, 'Logia et agrapha Domini Jesu apud Moslemicos scriptores, asceticos praesertim, usitata,' (*Patrologia Orientalis* 13) (Paris, 1919), pp. 327-431 and (*Patrologia Orientalis* 19) (Paris, 1926), pp. 529-601 contains a classic collection of 225 sayings of Jesus preserved in a variety of Islamic texts.

[1162] See M. Asín y Palacios, 'Influencias evangélicas en la literatura religiosa del Islam,' pp. 8-27, in T.W. Arnold and R.A. Nicholson, eds., *A Volume of Oriental Studies Presented to Edward G. Browne...on his 60th Birthday* (Cambridge, 1922) for a collection of 45 such sayings. Goldziher also collected a number of examples of sayings of Jesus from the Gospels, or ones clearly inspired by evangelical pronouncements, attributed to Muḥamad. See his 'Influences chrétienes dans la litérature religieuse de l'Islam,' in J. Desomogyi, ed., *Ignaz Goldziher: Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 2, (Hildeshei, 1968), pp. 305-307, 312-313.

[1163] See S.K. Bukhsh, *Contributions to the History of Islamic Civilization*, vol. 1 (2nd ed., Calcutta, 1929), p. 9 and pp. 5-12 in general for examples of elements of the Gospels which were given an Islamic pedigree in Muslim literature. NB: Bukhsh's book is a translation of A. von Kremer's *Culturgeschichtliche Streifzüge auf dem Gebiete des Islam* (Leipzig, 1873).

'*shahīd*' for 'martyr' was a post-Qur'ānic development related to the use of the word '*sāhdā*' in Syriac;[1164]

The shaping of the *sīra*: the biography of Muḥammad was elaborated in a context where Muslims were a distinct minority living among more ancient religious groups who belonged to the same broad tradition of sacred history which had as its ultimate source the Hebrew Bible and in accounts of the *sīra* we can see evidence that the Muslim community sought to portray its prophet using motifs and elements from the sacred histories of the groups around it; this has been noted by a number of scholars: Horovitz pointed out that under polemical pressure, the biography of Muḥammad was expanded to contain miraculous elements already in the time of Ibn Isḥāq, though the motifs came from a variety of traditions, Christian elements stand out: 'It is remarkable how often in the biography of the Prophet we find mention of things Christian,' he observed, suggesting that attacks from Christian controversialists on Muḥammad fueled the increase in miraculous motifs, some of them clearly inspired by events in the Gospels;[1165] Goldziher observed the parallels between accounts of Muḥammad miraculously increasing a supply of water to quench the thirst of a large number of believers, and multiplying only a little bit of barley and goat meat to feed a large number of people, and stories of Jesus turning water into wine and feeding the multitudes;[1166] in an extraordinary article, Jensen showed nearly a century ago that there were extensive parallels, too uncanny and numerous to be mere coincidence,

[1164] see Goldziher, 'Influences chrétienes dans la litérature religieuse de l'Islam,' pp. 307-312.

[1165] J. Horovitz, 'The Growth of the Mohammed Legend,' *The Moslem World* 10 (1920), pp. 49-58, quote from p. 57, see esp. pp. 50, 57-58 (reprinted in U. Rubin, ed., *The Life of Muḥammad* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 269-278. D.J. Sahas, 'The Formation of Later Islamic Doctrines as a Response to Byzantine Polemics: The Miracles of Muhammad,' *The Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 27.1-2 (1982), pp. 307-324, makes a similar argument, independent of Horovitz.

[1166] For these examples, see Goldziher, 'Influences chrétienes dans la litérature religieuse de l'Islam,' p. 304.

between the life of David as depicted in the Bible and the life of Muḥammad as represented in the *sīra*; Jensen suggested that other Biblical stories—those of the patriarchs, of Moses and Joshua and others—also found parallels in the portrayal of Muḥammad's life in the *sīra*;[1167] he also pointed to the fact that nearly all of the details of the childhood and pre-history of Jesus found parallels in Muslim depictions of the life of Muḥammad;[1168] later, Wensinck would document the extensive and striking parallels which Jensen had only alluded to; to cite Wensinck's account of only some of these remarkable resemblances:

> Āmina's pregnancy is without complications; a heavenly voice announces to her that she will bring the lord and prophet of his people into the world. One of his names will be al-Māḥī, the 'Effacer', because God will cleanse his followers of their sins through him. Āmina has not brought other children into the world; and even Muḥammad has not brothers and sisters, no half-brothers and half-sisters, no uncles, aunts, or aunts on his mother's side. He is pure at birth, circumcised, without an umbilical cord, and as he falls to earth, he braces himself with his hands. His birth is accompanied by extraordinary events in the heavens; on the occasion of his birth, Heraclius has the Jews murdered. Waraqa explains that he can now die since he has seen the promised ones, and 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib takes the new-born to the Ka'ba in his arms and thanks Allāh for this sign of His mercy. The boy grows up in the best way imaginable, borne up on Allāh's protective mercy. ... there are numerous echoes of the New Testament parables attributed to Muḥammad; the collection of Tirmidhī even has a separate chapter on these *amthāl*. Like Jesus, Muḥammad tells his followers about the future drama, *fitan*, and about the signs of the end of the world. Like Jesus, he was not sent with peace but with war and *jihād*. Like Jesus, he fasts

[1167] See P. Jensen, 'Das Leben Muhammeds und die David-Sage,' *Der Islam* 12 (1922), pp. 84-93 for the Old Testament connections. After a remarkable discussion of the parallels between the life of David and the life of Muḥammad, Jensen notes, p. 93: 'Und so stehen wir vor der Tatsache, daβ das ganze Leben Davids—und Sauls—in der Hauptsache—bezw. z.T.—in dem Muhammeds wiederkehrt.' The wide-ranging nature of these parallels, Jensen suggested, called for a reassessment of the historicity of the historical authenticity of both elements of the life of Muḥammad, as well as parts of the Qur'ān (p. 96). In tandem with Jensen's article, however, one should also read Horovitz's reaction to it, which is more circumspect about a number of the biblical parallels that Jensen identified and which also pointed out the need to look to post-Biblical Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian sources and not just the Bible when seeking to understand the genesis of certain narratives in the *sīra*. See J. Horovitz, 'Biblische Nachwirkungen in der Sira,' *Der Islam* 12 (1922), pp. 184-189. More recently, Ze'ev Maghen has written an article pointing out Muḥammad-David connections and has promised additional work on this topic. See his 'Intertwined Triangles: Remarks on the Relationship between two Prophetic Scandals,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 33 (2007), pp. 17-92.

[1168] Jensen, 'Das Leben Muhammeds und die David-Sage,' pp. 93-94.

> longer than a normal mortal because he is given strength to do so from on high. Like Jesus, he declares that he is more dear to the true believer than parents and children.[1169]

Isrā'īliyyāt: related to the presence in the *sīra* of numerous stories about Muḥammad which have been consciously and unmistakably shaped according to Jewish and Christian models is the fact that a large amount of Biblically-inspired material found its way into Muslim *hadīth* and *tafsīr* literature; although the sources of this material were both Jewish and Christian, it came to be known as 'Isrā'īliyyāt';[1170] 'Narrate about the Children of Israel,' Muḥammad is reported to have stated in a widely-reported *ḥadīth* which, Kister has pointed out, legitimated the taking up of Jewish and Christian stories by Muslim scholars, opening the floodgates for their traditions to come licitly pouring in;[1171]

Sufism: Massignon pointed out that a number of 'theological and ascetic' words used by Sufis were of Aramaic (Jewish or Christian) origin and also pointed to various 'structural analogies' between elements of Sufism and Christian and Jewish parallels as well as the fact that 'a certain number of ascetic Islam's early works seem to be free transpositions of Christian writings;'[1172] this should come as no surprise, for there is evidence for widespread contact between early Muslim ascetics and Christian monks; in this vein, early Muslim ascetics were fond of quoting Jesus; indeed, the word 'Ṣūfī' itself

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[1169] See A.J. Wensinck, 'Muḥammad and the Prophets,' trans. M. Richter-Bernburg, in U. Rubin, ed., *The Life of Muḥammad* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 339-340 (reprint of 'Muhammed und die Propheten,' *Acta Orientalia* 2 (1924), pp. 168-198.)

[1170] For a definition of 'Isrā'īliyyāt,' see Muḥammad Wahīb 'Allām, *al-Isrā'īliyyāt fī tafsīr al-Qur'ānī* (Beirut, 2007), pp. 53-54 and see the various definitions offered in R. Na'nā'a, *al-Isrā'īliyyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Damascus/Beirut, 1970), pp. 71-75. See also the article 'Isrā'īliyyāt,' by G. Vajda in *EI*[2] for a definition and discussion of Isrā'īliyyat. Vajda focuses more on Isrā'īliyyat as a Jewish phenomenon.

[1171] On this tradition and on Isrā'īliyyāt, see Kister's richly-documented and excellent, 'Ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'il wa-la ḥaraja: A Study of an early tradition,' *Israel Oriental Studies II* (Tel Aviv, 1972), pp. 216-239. Reprinted in *idem*., *Studies in Jāhiliya and Early Islam* (London, 1980), no. XIV.

[1172] See L. Massignon, *Essay on the Origins of the Technical Language of Islamic Mysticism*, trans. B. Clark, (Notre Dame, 1997), pp. 50-52, quote on Christian writings from p. 52.

is said to refer to woolen garments worn by Muslim ascetics, perhaps in imitation of the Christian monks whom they interacted with;[1173] Muslims themselves made this connection in the early medieval period: 'Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān went up to Basra,' Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī (d. AH 430/AD 1038) reported, 'and Farqad al-Sabakhī [d. AH 131/AD 748] came to him to him and on him was a garment of wool (*thawb ṣūf*), and so Ḥammād said to him: 'Remove from yourself this Christianity of yours!';[1174] that the first Sufi *ribāṭ* was established in the hotbed of monasticism that was Syria has been pointed to as another point of contact with Christianity;[1175]

Sacred places: When Arabs conquered the Middle East in the seventh century, they took over the regions which had served as the backdrop for the major events of Jewish and Christian sacred history; these were lands which were already thickly populated with associations between Biblical figures and specific locales and insofar as the Qur'ān positions itself as the culmination of the same sacred history which Judaism and Christianity belong to, it should come as no surprise that Muslims took over and sometimes expanded a huge number of Jewish and Christian traditions which associated specific Biblical figures and events with particular places in Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Mesopotamia, Iraq, Egypt and South Arabia;[1176]

[1173] See M. Smith, *Studies in Early Mysticism in the Near and Middle East* (Oxford, 1995), pp. 153-160 and A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chappel Hill, 1975), pp. 34-35. cf. the report where Jesus' disciples ask him what he wears and he responds, 'Wool' (*al-ṣūf*) in Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 12 (Riyadh, 2004), p. 134 (no. 35232).

[1174] Abū Nu'aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-awliyā' wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyā'* (Beirut, 1988), vol. 4, pp. 221-222. On Farqad, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl* (Beirut, 1992), vol. 23, pp. 164-169; for two reports from Farqad speaking about his reading the Torah, see *ibid*., p. 168. For this story about Ḥammād and Farqad and others which show Muslims making a (negative) connection between the woolen garment of Sufis and Christianity, see O. Livne-Kafri, 'Early Muslim Ascetics and the World of Christian Monasticism,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 20 (1996), p. 113.

[1175] See S. Seppälä, *In Speechless Ecstasy: Expression and Interpretation of Mystical Experience in Classical Syriac and Sufi Literature* (Helsinki, 2003), p. 24.

[1176] For this, see H. Busse, 'Der Islam und die biblischen Kultstätten,' *Der Islam* 42 (1966), pp. 113-147. Busse provides a listing, by city and region and based on medieval sources, pp. 137-142, of sites

Toponomy: hundreds of places have preserved their pre-Islamic, pre-Arabic names, and these names are often in origin Aramaic/Syriac;[1177]

Architecture: the earliest mosques lacked minarets and it has been suggested that this architectural feature actually had its genesis in the towers of Syrian churches, especially the four towers of the Church of St John the Baptist in Damascus which eventually became the Umayyad Mosque;[1178] moreover, the first *minbar* was built by a Christian slave in Medina and scholars have also suggested a connection between the form of this classic feature of Islamic architecture and the pulpits found in eastern Christian churches;[1179] similarly, in the case of another classic feature of the mosque, the concave *miḥrāb*, it seems that the first such *miḥrāb* was added to a mosque by Coptic workers rebuilding the mosque of Medina in 88-90 AH (AD 707-709) under al-Walīd and it has been therefore suggested that the concave *miḥrāb* itself owes its architectural

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associated with biblical figures which become part of the Islamic tradition. See also, H. Scwarzbaum, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk-Literature* (Walldorf-Hessen, 1982), pp. 69-72.

[1177] One need only peruse the entries in A. Frayḥa, *Mu'jam al-mudun wa-'l-qurā al-lubnāniyya wa-tafsīr ma'ānīhā: dirāsā lughawiyya* (Beirut, 1972) to see the huge numbers of places in modern Lebanon whose names are originally Syriac/Aramaic. For Lebanon, also see the list of places with Syriac names, pp. 387-411, in J. Hobeika, 'al-Dawāthir al-suryāniyya fī Lubnān wa-Sūriya,' *al-Machriq* 37 (1939), pp. 289-412. Similarly, for a multitude of Aramaic/Syriac place names in Syria, see B. Ayyūb, *al-Uṣūl al-suryāniyya fī asmā' al-mudun wa-'l-qurā al-sūriyya wa-sharḥ ma'ānīhā* (Aleppo, 2000). For medieval place names in Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine) with non-Arabic origins (Aramaic, Canaanite, Greek and other) see A. al-Ḥulw, *Taḥqīqāt ta'rīkhiyya lughawiyya fī 'l-asmā' al-jughrāfiyya al-sūriyya istinādan li-'l-jughrāfiyīn al-'arab* (Beirut, 1999). For the region of Mosul, a perusal of K. Awwād's *Taḥqīqāt buldāniyya, ta'rīkhiyya, athariyya fī sharq Mawṣil* (Baghdad, 1961) will turn up a large number of place names which are Aramaic in origin.

[1178] See K.A.C. Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture: Umayyads, Early 'Abbāsids, & Ṭūlūnids. Part One: Umayyads* A.D. 622-750 (Oxford, 1932), pp. 38-40. Creswell points out that there was no minaret in the first and second mosques built in Kufa, in the first and likely the second mosque built in Basra, and in the first mosque built in Fustat (p. 38). The first reference to a minaret comes in connection to the expansion of the mosque of 'Amr at Fustat in 53 AH (AD 673) and the minaret seems to have been introduced at the order of Mu'āwiya, who was living in Damascus. Interestingly, these minarets were referred to as *ṣawāmi'*, an Arabic word which is commonly used to refer to towers lived in by Christian monks. On the possible connection between the minaret and Christian churches, see also R. Hillenbrand's article 'Manāra, Manār,' in *EI*^{2}, vol. 6, esp. pp. 362-364. Hillenbrand identifies the first minaret as being built ca. 45 AH (AD 665) on the mosque in Basra.

[1179] See Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 31-32. See also J. Pedersen's article, 'Minbar,' in *EI*^{2}, vol. 7, pp. 73-76.

origin to the *haykal* in Egyptian churches; indeed, it seems to have been the case that in the second Islamic century, the use of a *miḥrāb* was forbidden by some Muslims because it was seen as having come from Christian churches;[1180] the striking similarities between the façade of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and the mosaic representation of the palace of Theodoric at Sant' Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna has led to the suggestion that the façade of al-Walīd's mosque took as its inspiration the Chalke palace of Constantinople, which was the archetype for the palace of Theodoric; furthermore, it has been suggested that the three aisles of the Umayyad Mosque were the result of a habit of construction which came about from the Muslim practice of converting three-aisled Christian basilicas into mosques;[1181] the design of the Dome of the Rock, perhaps the most famous of all early Islamic structures, follows the plan of late antique Christian martyria and mausolea—the Church of the Kathisma which I referred to in my previous chapter is just one example, the most dramatic, of a number of pre-Islamic Christian structures which seem to be architectural forebears of 'Abd al-Malik's structure in Jerusalem;[1182]

Language: in the medieval period, Abū Bakr b. Durayd (d. 321 AH/AD 933) observed that 'Much from Syriac entered into the Arabic of the people of Syria, just as the Arabs of Iraq used many things from Persian'[1183] and as one might expect, the Arab

[1180] See Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 98-99.
[1181] See Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 135-137.
[1182] See O. Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock* (Cambridge, MA./London, 2006), pp. 98-106. See also the extensive discussion in Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 70-90, of the architectural background of 14 different aspects of the Dome of the Rock.
[1183] For the quote, see Abū Manṣūr al-Jawālīqī, *al-Muʿarrab min al-kalām al-aʿjamī ʿalā ḥurūf al-muʿjam* (Cairo, 1361), p. 216. My translation, but cited in A. Schall, 'Der Arabische Wortschatz,' p. 148, in W. Fischer, ed., *Grundriß der Arabischen Philologie: Band I: Sprachwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

conquests would not leave the language of the conquerors unaffected;[1184] in the modern period a variety of studies have been done, mostly in Arabic, which show the influence that a Syriac/Aramaic substrate has had on the modern spoken dialects of Arabic in different parts of Greater Syria;[1185] in the medieval period, al-Jawālīqī (d. 540 AH/AD 1145) composed a work on the foreign vocabulary in Arabic;[1186] the great al-Suyūṭī (d. 911 AH/AD 1505) wrote on the foreign vocabulary of the Qur'ān[1187] and also wrote on how to distinguish foreign words in Arabic;[1188] to such studies can be added the works of Siegmund Fraenkel on the Aramaic words found in classical Arabic in a variety of different linguistic areas[1189] and Arthur Jeffery's work on foreign vocabulary in the Qur'ān; Jeffery's work shows that even before the Islamic conquests, Arabic speakers were in contact with other linguistic communities; studying the language of the Qur'ān, Jeffery noted, leads one to the 'conviction that not only the greater part of the religious vocabulary, but also most of the cultural vocabulary of the Qur'ān is of non-Arabic

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1184 In general, see the overview of A. Schall, 'Der Arabische Wortschatz,' pp. 142-153, esp., pp. 148-150 on the influence of Islamized people on Arabic, in W. Fischer, ed., *Grundriβ der Arabischen Philologie: Band I: Sprachwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

1185 For Mosul, see D. al-Chalabī al-Mawṣilī, *al-Āthār al-āramiyya fī lughat al-Mawṣil al-'āmiyya* (Mosul, 1935). For Lebanon and Syria, see J. Hobeika, 'al-Dawāthir al-suryāniyya fī Lubnān wa-Sūriyya,' *al-Machriq* 37 (1939), pp. 289-412; R. Nakhla, *Gharā'ib al-lahja al-lubnāniyya al-sūriyya* (Beirut, 1962), pp. 65-104; M.T. Feghali, *Étude sur les emprunts syriaques dans les parlers arabes du Liban* (Paris, 1918); F.M. Mubāraka, *Baqāyā al-ārāmiyya fī lughat ahl Ṣadad al-maḥkiyya* (Aleppo, 1999). For all of this and an overview in English, see J. Retsö, 'Aramaic/Syriac Loanwords,' pp. 178-182 in K. Versteegh, ed., *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, vol. 1 (Leiden/Boston, 2006). Also see F. Abu-Haidar, *A Study of the Spoken Arabic of Baskinta* (Leiden/London, 1979), pp. 178-179, which notes that most of the Syriac loan-words in the dialect of this Lebanese village have to do with agriculture or religion.

1186 See Abū Manṣūr al-Jawālīqī, *al-Mu'arrab min al-kalām al-a'jamī 'alā ḥurūf al-mu'jam* (Cairo, 1361). Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Khafājī (d. 1069 AH/AD 1658) wrote a supplement to al-Jawālīqī's work called *Kitāb shifā' al-ghalīl fīmā fī kalām al-'arab min al-dakhīl*, (Cairo, 1325).

1187 See for example his *al-Muhadhdhab fīmā waqa'a fī 'l-Qur'ān min al-mu'arrab* (Beirut, 1988) and *al-Mutawakkilī fīmā warada fī 'l-Qur'ān bi-'l-lugha al-ḥabashiyya wa-'l-fārisiyya wa-'l-hindiyya wa-'l-turkiyya wa-'l-zanjiyya wa-'l-nabaṭiyya wa-'l-qibṭiyya wa-'l-suryāniyya wa-'l-'ibrāniyya wa-'l-rūmiyya wa-'l-barbariyya* (Damascus, 1348).

1188 See *al-Muzhir fī 'ulūm al-lugha wa-anwā'ihā*, vol. 1, (Cairo, 1971), pp. 268-294. For all the preceding information on pre-modern Arabic-language studies of loan words in Arabic, I have been following A. Schall, 'Der Arabische Wortschatz,' p. 143, in W. Fischer, ed., *Grundriβ der Arabischen Philologie: Band I: Sprachwissenschaft* (Wiesbaden, 1982).

1189 See S. Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen* (Leiden, 1886).

origin;' the most important language for the Qur'ān's foreign vocabulary was Syriac;[1190] similarly, Ahmed Hebbo's study of the foreign vocabulary of the *sīra* of Ibn Hishām, the oldest example of Arabic prose after the Qur'ān, found several hundred words of non-Arabic origin; as with the Qur'ān, Aramaic (Jewish or Christian) was the most important source of such words, accounting, for example, for nearly half of the religious vocabulary of foreign origin and 37% of all non-Arabic loanwords;[1191]

Food: while adding some of their own cuisine to what they encountered, Arabs adopted the food of the conquered populations;[1192]

To these continuities, any number of others might be added: we are dealing with the whole of human culture. In addition to well known-continuities in coinage and administration,[1193] one can mention that similarities have been pointed out between the physical movements which accompany Muslim prayer and the motions which were associated with the prayer of pre-Islamic Christian ascetics;[1194] moreover, Goldziher suggested that there was a connection between the Zoroastrian practice of five daily prayers and the change in the number of required daily prayers in Islam from

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[1190] See A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'ān* (Baroda, 1938), p. 2 (quote), Syriac as 'most copious source of Qur'ānic borrowings,' p. 19.

[1191] A. Hebbo, *Die Fremdwörter in der arabischen Prophetenbiographie des Ibn Hischām (gest. 218/834)* (Frankfurt am Main, 1984), pp. 370-371 and A. Schall, 'Der Arabische Wortschatz,' p. 148.

[1192] See M. Rodinson's article *Ghidhā'* in *EI*², vol. 2, pp. 1057-1072, esp. p. 1062.

[1193] For a good treatment of the administrative continuities and discontinuities in Egypt in the first fifty years after the conquest, see P.M. Sijpesteijn, 'New Rule Over Old Structures: Egypt after the Muslim Conquest,' in H. Crawford, ed., *Regime Change in the Ancient Near East and Egypt: From Sargon of Agade to Saddam Hussein* (*Proceedings of the British Academy* 136) (Oxford, 2007), pp. 183-200. For the Umayyad administrative *ajnād* in Greater Syria being based on late Roman administrative structures, see J. Haldon, 'Seventh-Century Continuities: the *Ajnād* and the "Thematic Myth,"' in Av. Cameron, ed., *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East III: States, Resources and Armies* (Princeton, 1995), pp. 379-423. See also, A. Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria: An Archaeological Assessment* (London, 2007), p. 73.

[1194] See Seppälä, *In Speechless Ecstasy*, p. 20, citing a description of a Syrian monk's manner of prayer from John of Ephesus' (d. AD 586) *Lives of the Eastern Saints* as an example of pre-Islamic Christian ascetic prayer which bore resemblance to the eventual form that Muslim prayer would take. As will be seen below, pre-Islamic Arabs had contacts with Christian ascetics. See also the description of Manichaean prayer in G. Monnot's article, 'Ṣalāt,' in *EI*², vol. 8, p. 932.

three to five.[1195] Rudolf Macuch pointed out the close resemblance between the first half of the Muslim profession of faith—*lā ilāha illā Allāh* (There is no God but God)—and the pre-Islamic and very frequently-used Samaritan liturgical profession *lyt ʾlh ʾlʾ ʾḥd* (There is no God but One). What is more, Macuch pointed out the similarities between the entire Muslim *shahāda—lā ilāha illā Allāh wa-Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* (There is no God but God and Muḥammad is the Prophet of God)—and the (pre-Islamic) affirmation at the beginning of the important and popular Samaritan text, 'The Book of Miracles' (*Mēmar Marqā*): *hw' h'l hq'ym wlyt 'awran lbr mnh lyt 'l dmwth nbyh* ('He is the constant God and there is no one but him. There is no prophet like he (Moses)'). Similarly, the pre-Islamic Samaritan liturgical text known as the *al-Durrān* contains the affirmation *lyt ʾlh ʾlʾ ʾḥd lʾ nby kmwšy nby* ('There is no God but the One. There is no prophet like the Prophet Moses.')[1196] Becker went so far as to argue that the best way to explain the structure and history of the Muslim Friday prayer service, its differences from the apparently more ancient organization of the communal prayers held during the two *ʿīd*s (particularly the peculiar institution of two *khuṭba*s), was by seeing the Friday prayer as having the Christian liturgy as a model: in the same way the Umayyads introduced into mosques architectural features from Christian churches such as the *minbar*, the *miḥrāb* and the *maqṣūra*, he suggested, there was historical warrant for believing that during this same time, drawing on a pattern of organization familiar

[1195] See I. Goldziher, 'Islamisme et Parsisme: Mémoire lu à la séance générale du 6 septembre, à la Sorbonne,' repr. in J. Desomogyi, ed., *Ignaz Goldziher: Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 4 (Hildersheim, 1970), p. 246.

[1196] Translations are all Macuch's and can be found on pp. 3, 15-16 in his 'On the Pre-History of the Credal Formula "There is No God But God,"' trans. A.G. Goldbloom, in G. Hawting, ed., *The Development of Islamic Ritual* (Aldershot/Burlington, VT, 2006), pp. 3-21. Originally published as R. Macuch, 'Zur Vorgeschichte der Bekenntnisformel *lā ilāha illā llāhu*,' *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 128 (1978), pp. 20-38. Macuch, p. 16, calls *al-Durrān* 'the oldest Samaritan collection of liturgy,' and also observes, 'If we are not very much mistaken, the Samaritans did have the formal priority of this creed over the Muslim one.'

from the structure of Eastern Christian liturgies, they had made changes to the Friday communal prayer gathering.[1197]

And so it goes. The question of the origins of Arabic grammar is a debated one, but long ago, Goldziher pointed out that it began when vowels started to be marked on words—something acknowledged, he pointed out, by the tradition itself. The Arabic system of using three different dots, placed above, below, and inside letters, Goldziher suggested, was a development of the Syriac system which placed a dot above or below in order to mark vowels. As further proof of this, he called attention to the fact that *ḥafḍ* and *raf‘* (another, early way of referring to the vowel markings *kasra* and *ḍamma*, respectively) were literal translations of their Syriac equivalents, *rebāṣā* and *zeqāfā*.[1198] It has also been pointed out that the Syriac vowel names *petāḥā*, *ḥebāṣā* and *‘eṣāṣā* relate in their meaning to the Arabic *fatḥa*, *kasra*, and *ḍamma* and suggested that the use of the word *jarr* in Arabic to refer to the genitive may be a literal translation of the Syriac *ḥebāṣā*. What is more, one can find traces in Arabic grammar of a distinction between long and short vowels which may be related to the Syriac grammatical tradition's use of this classification.[1199] Other similarities between Arabic grammatical terminology before Sībawayhi and Syriac grammatical terminology, specifically that of Jacob of Edessa, have been pointed out.[1200]

[1197] See C.H. Becker, 'On the History of Muslim Worship,' trans. A. G. Goldbloom, in G. Hawting, ed., *The Development of Islamic Ritual* (Aldershot/Burlington, VT, 2006), pp. 49-74. Originally published as C.H. Becker, 'Zur Geschichte des islamischen Kultus,' *Der Islam* 3 (1912), pp. 74-99.

[1198] See I. Goldziher, *On the History of Grammar among the Arabs: An Essay in Literary History*, trans. Kinga K. Dévényi and T. Iványi (Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 4-9, esp. pp. 6-8.

[1199] See C.H.M. Versteegh, *Arabic Grammar and Qur'ānic Exegesis in Early Islam* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1993), pp. 30-31. In general, Versteegh's discussion of the question of Syriac influence on early Arabic grammar, pp. 28-32, is useful to read.

[1200] See R. Talmon, 'Jacob of Edessa the Grammarian,' pp. 174-176, in B. ter Haar Romeny, *Jacob of Edessa and the Syriac Culture of His Day* (Leiden/Boston, 2008).

Of course, some, perhaps many, of the things I have offered here as continuities are quite possibly in fact no such thing at all and many more examples of suggested continuities could be offered, but these will have to suffice. Much of the research that has been done in this area was carried out generations ago by Orientalists who had a broad and rigorous philological training and deep familiarity with more than one Near Eastern religious tradition that is unfortunately no longer common among most scholars of Islam or Eastern Christianity or Judaism; moreover, political and cultural sensitivities make the very project of suggesting origin stories for religious or cultural phenomena which differ from the stories told by a tradition itself threatening, unnerving and perhaps even offensive to some.

Nevertheless, regardless of politics, regardless of the (lack of) tact and agendas, (nefarious and otherwise) of scholars who have unearthed them, regardless of contemporary religious and cultural sensitivities, regardless of (post-)colonialist thought and critiques, regardless of whether we choose not to look for them or to ignore them, the continuities themselves remain. And they point to a very simple fact: the Arab conquests of the Middle East of the seventh century had at least as much an impact on the conquerors and their new religion as those conquests had on the conquered indigenous peoples whose descendants would eventually become the region's Arabic-speaking, Muslim majority. We are dealing with wide-ranging parts of the whole of human existence: the language that was spoken, the food that was eaten, the way the government was run day-to-day, the sort of religious measures people resorted to to deal with matters outside their control, the understanding of who Muḥammad was and what he did, the understanding of the importance and role of

Jesus, the language of the Qur'ān, the classification of sacred spaces, the physical layout and appearance of places of worship and more. These continuities are the result of actions taken by a huge number of historical actors whose names, places of birth, life and death, professions and other details are lost to us—this is the 'Dark Matter' to which I have referred. These individuals are invisible and were not historical actors in any robust sense—they have not left us sources which we can read and analyze and use to build modern historical syntheses. But like Dark Matter, the existence of the people who brought pre-Islamic cultural phenomena into, as it were, the bosom of Islam even as Islam was evolving, has to be posited to make sense of the Middle East and the Islam that result from the conquests of the seventh century. Again, though these anonymous individuals are not historical actors in any vigorous sense—they did not write treatises, rule kingdoms, lead armies, strike coins or build impressive monuments—in another, more profound sense, they are the most important historical actors of all. They are the ones whose descendants live in the region today and theirs is the Islam which is lived there, not the academic, normative Islam of medieval legal works. If we want to hear these actors speak, we have to learn to hear the echoes of their voices in the profound impact they and their descendants had on the shape that Islam and Middle Eastern society eventually took.

Our narrative sources, late and tendentious as they are, will mislead us if we look to them uncritically and hope to find straightforward answers to the question of how all these various pre-Islamic phenomena could have ended up wearing an Islamic name-tag and speaking Arabic. Smoking guns are hard to come by. Just as physicists have sought to devise sundry strategies for detecting Dark Matter, the challenge the

historian faces is to read the Arabic texts that we possess with an eye towards seeing the presence of the silent majority surrounding the Muslim minority in the Middle East which dominates our historical stage after the seventh century. Is there a way to integrate the image of the Middle East we get from Muslim Arabic texts with that we encounter in Syriac, Greek and Arabic texts written by Christians? Can we make incommensurables speak to one another?

The first step in reading these Islamic texts with a view towards discovering the silent majority and its role in the development of 'Islamic' society is to constantly keep in mind two points, one demographic, one religious, which I have returned to again and again in this chapter and the previous one: Muslims were a small minority and most of the earliest Muslims had come to Islam through mass conversion, not through intensely personal and highly-interiorized religious experiences. If we keep at the forefront of our historical imagination an image of early 'Islamic' society where Muslims were a small drop in a massive non-Muslim sea, where the bulk of Muslims were ones who had converted in groups and who did not have a strong sense of what 'Islam' required and entailed, where, after the conquests, conversion was often undertaken for reasons of expediency and under economic duress, and where it was possible to become a Muslim yet hold on to many Christian (or other pre-Islamic) symbols and rituals—in short, the sort of society I attempted to make an argument for in my previous chapter—we will have precisely the sort of social context which might explain the large number of continuities which we find between the pre-Islamic and 'Islamic' periods. 'Islam' was a placeholder which eventually came to have a set value (or a number of competing, but relatively well-articulated set values), but the process

by which Islam came to define itself and crystallize was nowhere near complete by the time of Muḥammad's death.[1201]

The Anxiety of Influence

If we keep such an image of early 'Islamic' society at the forefront of our imagination, we will also not be surprised when we find evidence that Muslim religious leaders—the spiritual entrepreneurs who, much like Jacob of Edessa, were seeking to shore up and erect the boundaries of their fledgling religious community—were afflicted with an anxiety of influence.[1202] Indeed, this is precisely what we should expect. If Muslim religious leaders had not had such an anxiety and tried to do something about it, the Arab conquerors of the seventh century and their descendants very likely would have suffered the same fate as the Mongol conquerors of the Middle East in the thirteenth: absorption and assimilation into the more developed and sophisticated religious traditions of the conquered people.

'These foreigners (*al-a'ājim*),' 'Umar II wrote to one of his governors, 'amuse themselves with things which Satan has adorned for them. Therefore, drive those Muslims who are near you away from that. By my life, it is appropriate for them to leave that [sort of thing], in accordance with what they read from the Book of God. So scold them away from what is vain and wanton in terms of singing and things like it. If they do not stop, then punish those of them who undertake it as an example with a chastisement which is not unjust.'[1203] 'Umar wrote these lines in the same letter I referred to in my previous chapter in which he decried Muslim women who were

[1201] See the comments of G. Hawting in his 'Introduction,' in G. Hawting, ed., *The Development of Islamic Ritual* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. xxvi.

[1202] This is an idea I owe to the work of Albrecht Noth (see below).

[1203] See Muḥammad b. Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* (Leiden, 1322), p. 290. With reference to the ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), pp. 245-246.

engaging in mourning practices from the *jāhiliyya*. The Caliph was dealing with a situation in which Muslims were both still engaged in pre-Islamic practices and where they were also adopting the behaviors of the conquered peoples around him and was none too happy on either account.

We have plenty of evidence to suggest that ‘Umar II's anxiety of influence was not unique in the early Islamic period. ‘If I die and you bring me out,’ ‘Imrān b. al-Ḥusayn b. ‘Ubayd (d. 53 AH/AD 673) is reported to have ordered, ‘hurry as you walk and do not go slowly as the Jews and Christians walk slowly and do not cause fire and wailing (*ṣawtan*) to follow me.’[1204] In one of the provisos of the so-called ‘Pact of ‘Umar,’ Christians had promised not to raise their voices (*aṣwātanā*) with their dead[1205] and ‘Imrān's request about how his funeral should be conducted suggests that some Muslims (perhaps converts?) had been following this Christian practice. But anxieties of influence extended to more than just funerary activities. According to one report relating to the collection of the text of the Qur'ān, once the text had been gathered, people discussed what the book should be called. One person suggested referring to it as ‘*al-sifr*’ (‘the book’) but Sālim, the *mawlā* of Abū Ḥudhayfa (who was credited in this report with the text's collection) averred: ‘That is a word,’ he is supposed to have said, ‘which the Jews use as a name,’ and so the people gathered there disapproved of it. Instead, Sālim suggested that they use the word ‘*muṣḥaf*’ (‘codex’) since he had seen a similar book in Ethiopia and that was the word used to refer to it there; this was the

[1204] Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 6, with reference to the ET in Bewley, *Men of Madina*, vol. 1, p. 6.

[1205] *Wa-lā narfa‘u aṣwātanā ma‘a mawtānā*. See Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā’ al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* (Cairo, 1950), p. 121.

label that everyone agreed on.[1206] The Prophet ordered that no one should dress in prayer as the Jews do, wearing only one garment: 'let he who has two garments dress himself and then pray.'[1207] After the conquest of Jerusalem, the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb prayed on the Temple Mount and then asked the Jewish convert Ka'b al-Aḥbār where they should put a new mosque. Ka'b suggested putting it behind the Rock on the Temple Mount in order to combine both the direction of prayer of Moses and that of Muḥammad. 'Umar rejected this idea: 'O Ka'b,' he said, 'you are imitating the Jewish religion! I have seen you taking off your shoes.'[1208] When travelling from al-Jābiya to Jerusalem 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb encountered some companions of Abū 'Ubayda who asked him to ride a certain kind of horse (*al-birdhawn*) and wear white clothing—it would look better on him, they told 'Umar, 'and we do not like for the People of the *Dhimma* to see you in the sort of style (*al-hay'a*) we see you in.' 'Umar did not take up the white clothes, but rode the horse for a while before getting rid of it. When members of his entourage tried to get him to wear the white clothes and ride the horse again, he refused. Once he arrived in Jerusalem, some Muslim men came to him 'having dressed,' al-Azdī tells us, 'in the clothing of the Byzantines and imitated them in their appearance (*hay'atihim*).' 'Stir up dust in their faces,' 'Umar commanded, 'until they

[1206] Al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān*, vol. 1, p. 209.

[1207] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1970), p. 358 (no. 1390).

[1208] Translation Y. Friedmann, *The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*, vol. 12 of *The History of al-Ṭabarī (Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk)* (Albany, 1992), p. 195. See especially Friedmann's comments, n. 723, p. 195. Arabic text in Abu Ja'far Mohammad bin Jarir Al-Tabari, *Annals of the Apostles and Kings*, vol. 5 (repr. Piscataway, NJ, 2005), p. 2408. For this, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 564. For changing early Muslim attitudes towards prayer in shoes relating an anxiety about imitating Jewish practices, see M.J. Kister, "'Do not assimilate yourselves...' *Lā tashabbahū*,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 12 (1989), pp. 340-349.

return to our look (*hay'atinā*) and our custom and our clothing!'[1209] Another clause in the 'Pact of 'Umar' had the Christians promise not to imitate Muslim dress in any way, or wear similar footwear, or part their hair in like manner.[1210]

Albrecht Noth pointed out that a variety of *ḥadīth* attribute to the Prophet injunctions that Muslims should not imitate non-Muslims: 'He who imitates a people is one of them,' 'He who imitates others does not belong to us,' 'Do not imitate Jews and Christians.' Another, related group of *ḥadīth* have Muḥammad enjoining Muslims to be different from (*khālifū*) Jews and Christians. To Noth belongs the insight that these regulations stemmed from a fear of being swallowed up by the conquered peoples in the post-conquest world; he connected such injunctions as well as stipulations on things like non-Muslim dress in the so-called 'Pact of 'Umar' (the *shurūṭ 'umariyya*) with the fragile and threatened situation Muslims found themselves in in the post-conquest period: 'the dress rules (etc.) for non-Muslims can also (or only?) be understood as protecting the Muslim conquerors who began to settle in the conquered territories, but who were still a small minority in an alien environment,' he wrote; in trying to draw sharp lines between Muslim and non-Muslim by regulating what sort of headgear, footwear, hairstyle and means of transportation non-Muslims used, what the Pact of 'Umar was doing was attempting to 'protect Muslim identity.'[1211]

[1209] Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūḥ al-shām* (Cairo, 1970), pp. 252-253. For this, see N. Khalek, *From Byzantium to Early Islam. Studies on Damascus in the Umayyad Era* (PhD Diss., Princeton, 2006), pp. 171-172.

[1210] Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* (Cairo, 1950), p. 121.

[1211] See A. Noth, 'Problems of Differentiation between Muslims and Non-Muslims: Re-reading the "Ordinances of 'Umar" (*Al-Shurūṭ al-Umariyya*),' trans. M. Muelhaeusler in R. Hoyland, ed., *Muslims and Others in Early Islamic Society* (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 119-121 (where Noth points out the two classes of *aḥādīth*, on imitation and differentiation) and p. 120 (quotes). This is a translation and reprint of the original article by Noth, 'Abgrenzungsprobleme zwischen Muslimen und Nicht-Muslimen. Die 'Bedingungen 'Umars (aš-Šurūṭ al-umariyya)' unter einem anderen Aspekt gelesen,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 9 (1987), pp. 290-315.

Similarly, Kister documented a number of different injunctions which were concerned with preventing and discouraging Muslims from imitating and adopting the customs and rituals of non-Muslims, especially Jews, but also pre-Islamic pagans and Christians as well.[1212] Before him, Vajda and Goldziher also took note of the Islamic tradition's concern that Muslims differentiate themselves the People of the Book: among other things, various *ḥadīth* ordered Muslims to dye their beards differently from those of the People of the book, to wear different clothing, to don different footwear, to wear their facial hair differently, to avoid the use of wigs because of their association with Jewish women; the Prophet enunciated regulations about interacting with menstruating women which were less strict than those followed by Jews and Islamic purity rules about female menstruation seem to have been purposefully more permissive than Jewish ones; Muslims were permitted sexual positions that Jews were not; the Prophet rejected Jewish claims about *coitus interruptus*; Muḥammad criticized the Jewish and Christian practice of turning the tombs of prophets into pilgrimage sites and ordered Muslims to not act in the same way; Muslims were ordered to avoid greeting others by motioning with their fingers, like Jews, or with their hands, like Christians; Muslims were not to sway back and forth in prayer like Jews, or to raise their hands in prayer like Jews.[1213] Measures were ordered about when Muslim fasts started and when they ended each day, when in the week and when in calendar they

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[1212] See M.J. Kister, "'Do not assimilate yourselves…' *Lā tashabbahū*,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 12 (1989), pp. 321-371. Also cf. A.J. Wensinck, *A Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition Alphabetically Arranged* (Leiden, 1971), s.n. 'Jews.'

[1213] For these examples and others, see G. Vajda, 'Juifs et Musulmans selon le Ḥadīt,' *Journal asiatique* 229 (1937), pp. 62-84. See also I. Goldziher, 'Usages Juifs d'après la littérature religeuse des musulmans,' in J. Desomogyi, ed., *Ignaz Goldziher: Gessamelte Schriften*, vol. 3, (Hildesheim, 1969), pp. 322-341. NB: p. 327: 'Bien des lois, bien des rites et même bien des usages de la vie ordinaire n'ont d'autre raison d'être, d'après l'exposé des motifs, que le désir, chez les Musulmans, de ne pas imiter les autres croyants et de se distinger d'eux le plus possible.'

took place—all with the express purpose of distinguishing Muslim fasts from those of the People of the Book; the time of the evening prayer was set so as not to imitate Jews; the Prophet expressed disapproval at peoples' saying to one another 'May God accept our (prayer) and yours' after praying because it was borrowed from the People of the Book; Muḥammad would stand at funerals until a rabbi informed him that Jews did the same: once Muḥammad heard this, he sat down and ordered those around him: 'Sit! Be different from them! (*khālifūhum*);' Muslims were to bury their dead differently from the People of the Book.[1214]

Above, I followed Kister in noting the existence of a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad encouraged Muslims to 'Narrate concerning the children of Israel for there is no sin (*lā ḥaraja*) in that,' a tradition that had legitimated Muslims taking up Jewish and Christian materials. But in addition to such encouragements we find a suspicion of foreign information as well. In one cryptic report Ibn Sīrīn (d. AH 110/AD 728) informs us, 'I told 'Abīda, "I have found a book. Shouldn't I read it?"' To which 'Abīda gave a simple response: 'No.'[1215] It is difficult to know what sort of book Ibn Sīrīn found given the terseness of the anecdote, but we have other indications that there was some unease in the early Islamic period about the things that might be found from the conquered peoples who surrounded the early Muslim community. 'Do not learn the barbarous language (*raṭāna*) of the foreigners (*al-ā'ājim*),' 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb is said to have ordered, 'and don't enter into their presence in their churches on the day of their feast, for wrath will come down upon them.'[1216] The Qur'ān itself seemed to admonish

[1214] For all these examples (and others), see Goldziher, 'Usages Juifs d'après la littérature religeuse des musulmans,' pp. 322-341

[1215] Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 8 (Riyad, 2004), p. 552 (no. 26709).

[1216] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1970), p. 411 (no. 1609).

Believers who were in doubt about what God had revealed to ask those who had read scripture before them (Q 10:94); the Prophet, for his part, however, is reported to have said: 'I do not doubt and I do not ask.'[1217] Asking Jews or Christians for information seems to have been a common temptation for early Muslims: 'How do you ask them about something,' Ibn 'Abbās is supposed to have said, referring to the People of the Book, 'when the Book of God is in your midst?'[1218] Other versions of this report suggest that Muslim religious leaders were not happy at all that Muslims were asking Christians and Jews about what was in their scriptures and were ignoring the revelation brought by Muḥammad: 'You ask the People of the Book about their books,' Ibn 'Abbās said, 'while you have with you the Book of God? You should read it as the closest of the scriptures in knowledge of God, one in which imperfection has not been mixed.'[1219] What we have is an attempt to assert the superiority of Muḥammad's revelation over previous ones in order to stop Muslims from looking to Jewish and Christian texts. A still longer version of this same report has Ibn 'Abbās not only assert the superiority of Muḥammad's revelation, but also assault the reliability of previous scriptures: 'How do you ask the People of the Book about something,' he is supposed to have said, 'when your Book, which God sent down to his Prophet...is among you? He [sc. Muḥammad] introduced the books [sic] out of knowledge of his Lord and did not mix in imperfection. Has God not informed you in His Book that they have changed the Book of God and altered it and written the Book with their hands and then said, "This is from God" in order to exchange it for a small price (cf. Q 2:79). Has not the knowledge which

[1217] 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6 (Beirut, 1973), pp. 125-126 (no. 10211).
[1218] See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), p. 51.
[1219] See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), p. 53.

comes from asking them been forbidden? By God, we have never seen a man from among them asking you about what God has sent down to you!'[1220]

Ibn 'Abbās's attack on Muslims asking Christians and Jews for information from their scriptures, at least in this longer report, seemed to have at least in part come from dismay at the lack of reciprocity in interest: People of the Book did not seem to be equally curious to find out what the Qur'ān had to say. But there was more than just a worry about asymmetry at play—there was the charge of Christians and Jews having corrupted their scriptures, purposefully, so as to trade the truth for an easier life here and now. Part of the suspicion of seeking information from Jews and Christians perhaps also stemmed from an anxiety that non-Muslims might try to trick and deceive Muslims or contradict Muḥammad's message: Abū Namla spoke of sitting with Muḥammad when 'a man from the Jews' came to the Prophet. 'O Muḥammad,' the Jew asked, 'does this corpse speak?' 'God knows best,' was Muḥammad's reply. 'I bear witness,' the Jew responded, 'that it speaks!' And so, we are told, Muḥammad ordered Muslims: 'Do not speak to the People of the Book! Neither believe them nor consider them liars, but say "We have believed in God and his books and his prophets.' That way, if [what they say] is true, you have not called them liars, and if it is false, you have not believed them.'[1221]

There was also perhaps a worry that Muslims would be attracted to the scripture and teachings of prophets who preceded Muḥammad: 'By the One in whose hand is Muḥammad's soul,' the Prophet was supposed to have said to Muslims, 'if Moses were to appear to you and you were to follow him and leave me, you will have gone

[1220] See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), p. 52.
[1221] See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), p. 51.

astray. You are my portion from among the nations and I am your portion among the Prophets.'[1222] Muslims were not to get too fond of what they might find in other scriptures: Muḥammad was the prophet they had been allotted, just as they were the people whom he, as a prophet, had been allotted.

Even the tradition in which Muḥammad encouraged Muslims to narrate about the children of Israel took different forms and was not always quite so positive about Muslims getting information from Jews and Christians. 'Do not ask the People of the Book about anything,' the Prophet is supposed to have said, according to one version of this tradition, 'for if they give you guidance, they have led their souls astray.' In response to this pronouncement, Muḥammad was reportedly asked, 'O Apostle of God, are we not to narrate concerning the Children of Israel?' 'He said,' the report continued, 'Narrate—there is no sin.'[1223] Another version of this tradition had the Prophet admonishing: 'Do not ask the People of the Book about anything, for they will not guide you and they have led their souls astray: they deny the truth or believe in what is false.' Despite this suspicion of the motivations of the People of the Book, Muḥammad expressed a confidence that, deep down inside, they knew that the message of Islam was right: 'There is no one among the People of the Book,' the Prophet continued, 'who does not have something in the back of his heart (*illā fī qalbihi tāliya*) which calls him to God and His Book.'[1224]

Notwithstanding such reservations about seeking out information from People of the Book, learning their language and studying their scriptures, it seems that at least

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[1222] See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), p. 51.

[1223] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), (no. 4220) p. 543. On this more suspicious version of the *ḥaddithū* tradition, see Kister, '*Ḥaddithū 'an banī isrā'īla*,' p. 219.

[1224] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), (no. 19332) pp. 543-544.

some Muslims were doing just this. ‘Do you know Syriac well?’ Muḥammad was supposed to have asked his secretary, Zayd b. Thābit, ‘For books are coming to me!” ‘I said, “No,”’ Zayd reported. The Prophet’s response? “Then learn it!” ‘So I learned it,’ Zayd continued, ‘in nineteen days.’[1225] There were several variations on this *ḥadīth* in circulation and ‘Syriac’ and ‘Hebrew’ seemed to have been interchangeable. ‘Books which I do not want everyone to read are coming to me,’ the Prophet told Zayd in a similar report, ‘could you therefore learn Hebrew (or Syriac) writing?’ ‘I said yes,’ the report goes on, ‘and I learned it in seventeen nights.’[1226] We have other indications of early Muslims seeking information either from the books of the People of the Book or from actual Christian or Jewish informants. ‘Abd Allāh b. Salām, a Jewish convert to Islam, is reported to have once approached the Prophet: ‘I have recited the Qur’ān and the Torah,’ he told him. ‘Recite this one one night,’ Muḥammad responded, ‘and this one the next.’[1227] Shurayk b. Khalifa reported seeing ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, a Companion of the Prophet and the son of the famous Muslim general, reading Syriac.[1228] ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr was supposed to have gotten hold of two animal-loads of books from the People of the Book at the Battle of Yarmuk and he would use them to teach people.[1229] Al-Aqra‘, the *mu’adhdhin* of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, reported that ‘Umar

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[1225] *fa-inna-hā ta’tīnī kutub*. Ibn Abī Dāwud, *Kitāb al-maṣāḥif* (Leiden, 1937), p. 3. .

[1226] See al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl*, vol. 10 (Beirut, 1989), p. 28.

[1227] *Iqra’ hādhā laylatan wa-ḥādhā laylatan*. Abū ‘Abd Allāh Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, *Kitāb tadhkirat al-ḥuffāẓ*, vol. 1, (Hyderabad/Deccan, 1955), p. 27. For this example, see R. Na‘nā‘a, *al-Isrā’īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Damascus/Beirut, 1970), p. 160, n. 1.

[1228] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 189. ET available in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 306. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was only eleven years younger than his famous father and was famous for the number of *ḥadīth* he transmitted. On ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā’ al-rijāl*, vol. 15 (Beirut, 1988), pp. 357-362.

[1229] For this, see R. Na‘nā‘a, *al-Isrā’īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Damascus/Beirut, 1970), p. 146.

‘summoned the bishop and said, “Do you find in your books…?’[1230] And there is still more: ‘I came to the mountain,’ said Abū Hurayra (d. AH 58 or 59/AD 678), perhaps the most prolific of all *ḥadīth* transmitters from Muḥammad, ‘and I found there Ka‘b [al-Aḥbār]. He and I stayed a day—with me telling him about the Prophet and him telling me about the Torah…’[1231] ‘From al-Ḥirah’s churches,’ Ibn al-Kalbī (d. AH 204/AD 819 or AH 206/821), the great genealogist and scholar reported, ‘I used to obtain data about the Arabs, the genealogy of the family of Naṣr b. Rabī‘ah, the dates of their service to the Persian emperors and the chronicle of their years. For in those churches is a record of their kingdom and all their affairs.’[1232]

Above, I cited a report attributed to Ibn ‘Abbās in which he urged Muslims not to read Christian and Jewish texts because they had been willfully changed to conceal God’s truth. Another report, however, has ‘Umar give his blessing to reading the Torah—so long as one knew it was free from alteration. ‘If you know that it is the Torah which God sent down to Moses, the Son of ‘Imrān,’—i.e., that it is not some later, corrupted version—‘read it day and night.’[1233] Another report has ‘Umar approach Muḥammad and give him a book: ‘O Apostle of God,’ he is supposed to have said, ‘I have obtained an excellent book from a certain one of the People of the Book!’[1234] ‘Abīda had

[1230] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7. 1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 73, ET made with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 62.

[1231] Cited from al-Nisā’ī in R. Na‘nā‘a, *al-Isrā’īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Damascus/Beirut, 1970), pp. 137. On Abū Hurayra, see J. Robson’s article, ‘Abū Hurayra al-Dawsī al-Yamānī’ in *EI*[2].

[1232] Translation M. Perlmann, from M. Perlmann, trans., *The Ancient Kingdoms*, vol. 4, *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany, 1987), p. 150. Arabic text in Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, vol. 2 (Leiden, 1881-1882), p. 770. For this, see W. Atallah’s article, ‘al-Kalbī,’ in *EI*[2].

[1233] See Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi‘ bayān al-‘ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), p. 53.

[1234] Muḥammad’s response was anger. ‘Are they not perplexed at [their own books], O son of al-Khaṭṭāb?!’ the Prophet is supposed to have responded. ‘By the One in whose hand is my soul, I have brought you a spotless saying concerning them [sc. the scriptures of the People of the Book]: “Do not ask them about anything, for they will speak to you of something true and you will regard it false, or of something false and you will regard it true.’ As with a tradition I referenced above, this particular report

told Ibn Sīrīn in a report I mentioned above not to read the book he had found, but not all Muslims had such a view towards newly discovered texts. According to a report in Ibn Sa'd, Abū al-Jald al-Jawnī 'used to read books.'[1235] 'My father,' Abū al-Jald's daughter reminisced, 'used to recite the Qur'ān every seven days and would finish the Torah in six—he would recite it while looking at it. And if it was the day when he was finishing it [sc. the Torah], people would gather for that reason. He would say, "it was said that mercy descends upon its completion [sc. the finishing of the recitation of the Torah]."'[1236] Tubay', the son of the wife of Ka'b al-Aḥbar, we are told, was a learned man who read books and gained much knowledge by listening to Ka'b.[1237]

Ka'b (d. 32 AH/AD 652-653) himself was a Yemeni Jew who converted to Islam and who was an important vector through which Jewish materials entered the Islamic tradition.[1238] Ka'b did not convert to Islam till after the death of Muḥammad, perhaps around 17 AH/AD 638 and the story of Ka'b's conversion, like the story of the monk Baḥīra, allowed Muslims to understand their religion as being foretold in and confirmed by previous religions which had grown from the soil of the Hebrew Bible. 'What prevented you from becoming Muslim in the time of the Apostle of God...and of Abū Bakr,' al-'Abbās is supposed to have asked Ka'b, 'up till the present in the time of 'Umar?' Ka'b's purported answer reflected the Muslim suspicion, which we have

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contained a counterfactual claim which was aimed at both keeping Muslims away from Jewish and Christian scriptures as well as assuring them that Muḥammad's revelation was in line with what had come before: 'By the One in whose hand is my soul,' the Prophet continued, 'if Moses were alive, he would only be able to follow me.' See Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Jāmi' bayān al-'ilm wa-faḍlihi*, vol. 2 (Medina, 1968), pp. 52-53. Compare this claim with Jesus' statement against Jewish opponents that Abraham had seen his ministry and rejoiced at it (John 8:56).

1235 See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 161.

1236 See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 161. ET made with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 140.

1237 See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 160.

1238 See the article on Ka'b in *EI*[2] by M. Schmitz.

already encountered, that Jews and Christians were hiding parts of their scriptures which bore witness to the truth of Muḥammad's message. 'My Father,' Ka'b reportedly said, 'wrote a book for me from the Torah and turned it over to me and said, "Work with this," and put a seal on the rest of his books. He restrained me, with the right of a father over his son, from breaking the seal. When it came to the present and I saw Islam appear and saw no harm [in it], my soul said to me: "Perhaps your Father has concealed knowledge from you—he has hidden from you! If you were to read it..." So I broke the seal and I read it and I found in it a description of Muḥammad and his community and have therefore now come as a Muslim.'[1239]

The story of Ka'b, like that of Baḥīra, shows that Muslims did in fact have a keen interest in seeing how Muḥammad's new text related to previous scriptures and believed that Muḥammad's claims would be verified there. Abū al-Jald's recitation of the Torah alongside the Qur'ān had been something of public interest and Ka'b himself, we are told, went so far as to study the Torah in the mosque: Ḥuṣayn b. Abī al-Ḥurr al-'Anbarī reported going into the mosque in Syria, in what must have been the earliest post-conquest period, and seeing Ka'b and 'Āmir b. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abd al-Qays. 'Between them was one of the books of the Torah,' Ḥuṣayn narrated, 'and Ka'b was reading. When [Ka'b] came to something that pleased him, he explained it to ['Āmir].'[1240]

Regardless of whether Muḥammad or 'Umar or Ibn 'Abbās or anyone actually ever uttered any of the traditions I have discussed above, they are important because they reflect precisely the sort of tensions between an openness to and interest in

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[1239] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 154. ET made with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 277.

[1240] See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7.1 (Leiden, 1915), p. 89, ET made with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, trans. A. Bewley, vol. 1 (London, 1997), p. 68.

Judaism and Christianity and an aversion to information coming from these traditions that are precisely what one would expect if Muslim religious leaders were concerned about keeping their community, many of whose members did not have a profound acquaintance with or understanding of Muḥammad's message, from assimilating into the highly-sophisticated, numerically superior communities they found themselves surrounded by. These traditions, when circulated, could serve as either warning signs to Muslims to avoid the religious literature of Christians and Jews, or alternately, could provide legitimation for their doing so. The continuities I have attempted to lay out in this chapter suggest that, despite the best efforts of some Muslim religious leaders to stanch the inflow of non-Muslim ideas into their young religion, much non-Muslim material did in fact 'enter the bloodstream of Islam,' to use Patricia Crone's expression.[1241] This reality raises the question of the mechanisms of how non-Muslim material became Islamicized. What were the vectors through which so much pre-Islamic, late antique material came to wear a Muslim badge and have an Arabic calling card?

Reaching out and Touching Someone

The flow of information into Islam from older, non-Muslim communities must have occurred in a myriad of different ways and any model we put forth for trying to understand the process by which many aspects of what was simply Late Antique Christian, Jewish, or Middle Eastern culture came to be 'Islamic' as well must recognize the multiplicity of mechanisms of transmission. Historians have a weakness for the textual, but if we focus only on one this mode of transmission—essentially looking for

[1241] A phrase I have taken from Patricia Crone's introductory remarks at the 'Islamic Freethinking and Western Radicalism' conference held at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, 21-24, 2008.

evidence that some (anonymous?) Muslim directly copied an idea or practice from a Christian or Jewish text—we will blind ourselves to the fact that there must have been an enormous oral layer of transmission: Muslims and non-Muslims living together, side-by-side and having a shared existence. Indeed, Arab Muslim immigrants into Syria, from the very earliest period, settled in pre-existing towns and cities; the two Syrian garrison cities of al-Jābiya and al-Ramla never took off as significant places of Muslim habitation.[1242] We must also remember that garrison cities themselves were not hermetically sealed off from the populations around them: in the previous chapter, I cited a letter of ʻUmar II forbidding Christians from selling wine in garrison cities and one might also mention another letter of ʻUmar II ordering the churches in the garrison cities of the Muslims be destroyed.[1243] Similarly, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. AH 110/AD 728) is reported to have said that the *sunna* dictated destroying churches in the garrison cities, both new and old.[1244] We have other indications of Christians present in areas of Muslim settlement as well.[1245] And even without such indications, we would have to

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[1242] See F.C. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 245-250. On Muslim settlement patterns in Syria, see D. Whitcomb, 'Amṣār in Syria? Syrian Cities after the Conquest,' *Aram* 6 (1994), pp. 13-33 and A. Walmsley, *Early Islamic Syria: An Archaeological Assessment* (London, 2007), pp. 71-112. Against the view that Muslims did not establish new towns and for a discussion of various garrison cities of (e.g., Aylah, ʻAnjar, al-Ramlah), as well as the desert palaces, see *ibid*., pp. 90-104. For an increase in contacts between Muslims and Christians towards the end of the seventh century, see R. Hoyland, 'Jacob of Edessa on Islam,' in G.J. Reinink and A.C. Klugkist, eds., *After Bardaisan: Studies on Continuity and Change in Syriac Christianity in Honour of Professor Han J.W. Drijvers* (Leuven, 1999), pp. 152-153.

[1243] See Shams al-Dīn Abī ʻAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, vol. 2, p. 122.

[1244] See ʻAlī b. Muḥammad b. al-Durayhim, *Manhaj al-ṣawāb fī qubḥ istiktāb ahl al-kitāb* (Beirut, 2002), p. 166 and also ʻAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 548 (no. 19351).

[1245] See the evidence assembled by Lammens for Christians in Ayla in 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʻawiya Ier,' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 298 and his argument that the number of Christians in Medina *increased* after the death of Muḥammad such that ʻUmar would lament their large number there on his deathbed (p. 269). Kufa, which along with Basra, was perhaps the garrison city *par excellence* was known in Syriac as ʻĀqūlā or ʻAqūlā (see *Thesaurus Syriacus*, col. 2964) and had a pre-Islamic life and existence. For Christians in Islamic Kufa, see S. Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā fī khilāfat banī Umayya*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 2005), pp. 409-421. Lammens, pp. 299-301, also contains information about the presence of Christians in Kufa and the open practice of Christianity there. Three miles from Kufa was the city of al-Ḥīra, an important Christian center. On Christians and

assume that the number of non-Muslim slaves and concubines in the garrison cities must have been substantial.[1246]

If we have Muslims and Christians living in close proximity, what we find is that we are confronted again with the problem of the ghosts of conversations past which I took up earlier in this dissertation. Because the conversations, debates and discussions through which Muslims came into contact with the traditions of the non-Muslims over whom they ruled have all vanished and are unknown to us, we cannot recover what must have been one of the most important, if not *the* most important, vectors by which Muslims learned of non-Muslim ideas and practices. What we can do, however, is attempt to sketch out some of the concrete social milieux of contact where Muslims and non-Muslims rubbed shoulders.[1247] In other words, we can turn this question of intellectual and cultural history into one of social history as well in order to try to understand the nuts and bolts of the formation of what eventually is understood to be 'Islam' and 'Islamic society.' In what remains of this chapter, I will attempt to suggest some of the social milieux of contact and vectors by which Muslims came into contact with non-Muslims and in which their shared experiences there perhaps offered

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al-Ḥīra, see Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣāra*, vol. 2, pp. 395-409. Also, see the article 'al-Ḥīra' by A.F.L. Beeston and I. Shahid in *EI*[2] for al-Ḥīra as an important locus of Nestorian Christianity. According to Yāqūt, (*Mu'jam al-*buldān, vol. 2 (Beirut, 1957)) monasteries in al-Ḥīra or near Kufa included Dayr Ibn Barrāq (al-Ḥīra, p. 496), Dayr Ibn Waḍḍāḥ (al-Ḥīra, p. 496), Diyārāt al-Asāqif (p. 498, in Najaf, in the vicinity of Kufa and at the beginning of al-Ḥīra), Dayr al-Askūn (al-Ḥīra, 498), Dayr al-A'war (in the vicinity of Kufa, p. 499), Dayr Banī Marīnā (in the vicinity of al-Ḥīra, p. 501), Dayr al-Jara'ah (in al-Ḥīra, p. 503), Dayr al-Jamājim (p. 503, in the vicinity of Kufa); Dayr al-Ḥarīq (in al-Ḥīra, p. 505), Dayr Ḥanẓala (al-Ḥīra, p. 507), Dayr Ḥanna (al-Ḥīra, p. 507), Dayr Sarjis wa-Bakkus (in Ṭīzanābādh, between Kufa and al-Qādisiyya, p. 514), Dayr al-Sawā (in the vicinity of al-Ḥīra, p. 514), Dayr al-Shā' (perhaps in the territory of Kufa, p. 518), Dayr 'Alqama (al-Ḥīra, p. 524), Dayr al-Lujj (al-Ḥīra, p. 530), Dayr Mārt Maryam (al-Ḥīra, p. 531), Dayr Mār Fāythūn (al-Ḥīra, p. 531), Dayr Mār 'Abdā (in the area of al-Ḥīra, p. 536), Dayr al-Maz'ūq (in the vicinity of al-Ḥīra, p. 538) and Dayr Hind al-Ṣughrā (in al-Ḥīra and close to the land of Banī 'Abd Allāh b. Dārim in Kufa, p. 541). Yāqūt also gives the names of several monasteries located near Basra: Dayr Jābīl (p. 503) was near Basra and Dayr al-Dihdār (p. 509) was a monastery of pre-Islamic origins in the area of Basra.

1246 I am grateful to Peter Brown for this point.

1247 I have been influenced here by the remarks and ideas of Crone at the 'Islamic Freethinking and Western Radicalism' conference, see above, n. 1241.

settings in which non-Muslim ideas and practices came to be taken up by Muslims. In the previous chapter, I dealt with one important area of contact—the relationship between Muslims and Christian holy men and sacraments. And now, from among the many further points of contact which must have existed, I will narrow my focus to the following: religiously-mixed families, daily contacts in towns and cities, Christian monasteries and religious festivals, religious converts and prisoners of war. I will take each of these up in turn.

Religious Interaction Begins...At Home

Many of the hybrid religious practices I attempted to adduce evidence for in my previous chapter no doubt were the result of marriages between Muslim men and Christian women, or marriages in which a man would convert to Islam but his wife would remain Christian. Muslim men were allowed to marry the women of the People of the Book (cf. Q 5:5) and we have evidence that this was an attractive prospect that even caused potential problems for Muslim women who could not find spouses. After Muslim forces captured al-Madā'in in Iraq, Ḥudhayfa was appointed by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb as its governor. When 'Umar saw that the number of Muslim women without husbands was on the rise in the area, he ordered Ḥudhayfa to divorce his wife, who was herself not a Muslim. Ḥudhayfa wrote to the Caliph, asking whether he was permitted to marry a member of the People of the Book: 'It is indeed permissible,' 'Umar responded, 'but the non-Arab women are captivating, and if you draw near to them they will wrest you from your wives.'[1248] Arab soldiers might also marry non-Muslim women simply because there were no Muslim women to be found in places far from

[1248] Translation Y. Friedmann, in *idem*., trans., *The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*, vol. 12 of *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany, 1992), p. 159.

home: ‘I participated in the battle of al-Qādisiyyah with Sa‘d,’ Jābir reported, ‘We married women from the People of the Book, as we did not find many Muslim women. When we returned, some of us divorced them and some of us kept them.’[1249] There was, of course, Prophetic precedent for marrying women from the People of the Book: numbered among Muḥammad’s eleven wives was Ṣafiyya bint Ḥuyayy b. Akhṭab,[1250] a Jew, and the mother of Muḥammad’s only son, Ibrāhīm, was a Coptic slave named Mary.[1251] Muḥammad gave Mary’s sister, Sīrīn, to Ḥassān b. Thābit, and she bore him a son named ‘Abd al-Raḥmān.[1252] Early caliphs would follow Muḥammad’s lead: ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān, for instance, had a Christian wife named Nā’ila b. al-Furāfiṣa and Mu‘āwiya famously had a Christian wife name Maysūn.[1253]

We should not forget that the demographic realities of the early ‘Islamic’ Middle East offered plenty of opportunities for this particular type of Muslim-Christian interaction. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr wrote to ‘Alī and asked him about the case of a Muslim man who had fornicated with a Christian woman: the Muslim, ‘Alī responded, should receive the *ḥadd* punishment and the woman should be turned over to her religious community to be taken care of.[1254] And though I will focus here on Muslim men marrying non-Muslim, especially Christian, women, we should not think that non-

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[1249] Translation Y. Friedmann, in *idem*., trans., *The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine*, vol. 12 of *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany, 1992), p. 159.

[1250] See A. Guillaume, trans., *The Life of Muhammad: A translation of Isḥāq’s* Sīrat Rasūl Allāh (London, 1955), pp. 511, 514-515, 516.

[1251] See Guillaume, *The Life of Muḥammad*, p. 653.

[1252] See Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 5, (Leiden, 1905), p. 196. ET available in Muhammad Ibn Sa‘d, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), p. 166.

[1253] See S. Qāshā, *Aḥwāl al-naṣārā fī ‘l-khilāfat banī Umayya*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 2005), p. 126. On Maysūn, see H. Lammen’s article, ‘Maysūn’ in *EI*^{2}. For Nā’ila as Christian, see Abū Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-aghānī*, vol. 15 (Bulaq, 1868-1869), p. 70. For the common practice among the Umayyads of marrying women from the Christian tribe of Kalb, see H. Lammens, ‘Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Mo‘awiya I^{er},’ *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 157.

[1254] See ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9, (Beirut, 2000), p. 549 (no. 19356).

Muslim men and Muslim women had no venereal interaction: 'If a man from the People of the Book,' Ibn Jurayj reported, 'fornicates with a Muslim woman or steals something from a Muslim man, [a punishment] should be established against him and the Imām should not turn away from it.'[1255] Similarly, Jacob of Edessa himself had dealt with the question of whether a Christian man or woman who committed adultery with a pagan was to receive the same punishment as a Christian who committed adultery with a Christian.[1256] A letter from the Patriarch Athanasios of Balad (d. 686 AD), written perhaps in 684, condemns 'wretched' Christian women who were 'unlawfully and inappropriately' marrying pagan men (*ḥanpē*); these *ḥanpē* may have in fact been Muslims or, were at the very least, understood as such by the later tradition.[1257] In the seventh and eighth centuries, as now, the heart was blind to sectarian affiliation.[1258]

The combination of demographics—Muslims existing as a small minority in a sea of non-Muslims—and permissive religious regulations—Muslim men could have up to four wives and were allowed to marry women from the People of the Book—meant

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[1255] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9, (Beirut, 2000), p. 550 (no. 19363).

[1256] See Mardin 310, fol. 206a (p. 409): ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܫܘܐ ܡܫܘܡ ܒܙܢܝܐ ܕܗܘ ܕܓܐܪ ܒܚܢܦܬܐ ܘܕܗܘ ܕܓܐܪ ܒܟܪܝܣܛܝܢܝܬܐ. ܐܦ ܕܐܢܬܬܐ ܗܟܘܬ ܕܐܝܢ ܕܝ ܥܡ ܚܢܦܐ ܓܒܪܐ، ܕܐܝܢ ܕܝ ܒܟܪܝܣܛܝܢܐ. ܝܥܩܘܒ ܠܐ ܫܘܐ ܐܢ ܕܝܢ ܘܡܢ ܚܠܦܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܕܐ. ܢܬܩܪܒܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܠܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܐ ܠܘܬ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܢܗܘܐ ܫܘܐ ܐܘ ܙܥܘܪ. ܐܘ ܕܢܬܒܨܪ. ܗܘ ܕܝܢ ܕܐܬܩܪܝ، ܠܘܬ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ. ܕܠܐ ܥܘܢܫܐ ܢܩܘܐ ܡܢ ܒܬܪ ܦܘܪܩܢܗ. ܐܢ ܓܒܪܐ ܗܘ ܘܐܢ ܐܢܬܬܐ 'Addai: Whether the punishment is equal for a [man] who commits adultery with a pagan woman and for a [man] who commits adultery with a Christian woman? Also, whether [it is the same] for a [Christian] woman [who commits adultery] with a pagan man and a [Christian woman who commits adultery] with a Christian man? Jacob: It is not the same. If, however, on account of something like this, unbelievers are induced to faith, it should be the same or it should be less. In the case of one who has been called to faith, let that one remain without penalty after his salvation, be he a man or a woman.' Text and LT also available in Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 166-169.

[1257] On the date of the text, cf. n. 569 and n. 1119, above. Syriac text and FT in F. Nau, 'Littérature canonique syriaque inédite,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 14 (1909), p. 129: ܘܢܫ̈ܐ ܬܘܒ ܕܒܥܘ̈ܠܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܗܘܐ ܡܙܕܘܓܢ ܠܚܢ̈ܦܐ ܠܐ ܢܡܘܣܐܝܬ ܘܠܐ ܘܠܝܐܝܬ '...and also women who are somehow unlawfully and inappropriately wedded to pagans.' The incipit of this letter (p. 128) states that it is concerning the Hagarenes (ܗܘ ܠܒܪ̈ܝܐ). This incipit was already included with the letter in its earliest ms., Mardin 310 (fol. 183b/p. 366), which dates from the eighth century.

[1258] Perhaps less romantically, mention can be made of Anastasios of the Sinai speaking about Arabs forcing elderly female ascetics who were virgins into marriage. See, M. Richard and J.A Munitiz, edd., *Anastasii Sinaitae: Questiones et Responsiones* (Turnhout, 2006) p. 162.

that it was only inevitable that religious intermarriage would take place.[1259] And when we read accounts of Muslims holding various Christian symbols and rituals in high esteem—baptism, Jesus, the Eucharist, saints, holy men—we should remember that many of these Muslims were no doubt married to Christian women, had Christian concubines, were the children of Christian mothers, or were descended from people who had been all of these things. In the twelfth century, in fact, Balsamon would explicitly link baptism of Muslims in Anatolia with the efforts of their Christian mothers.[1260] Some women who married Muslim men converted upon marriage, but others remained Christians. Ibn Rusta, writing in the third/tenth century, included a list of early Muslim notables (*ashrāf*) whose mothers were Christians.[1261] Before him, Ibn al-Kalbī (d. AH 204/AD 819 or AH 206/821), composed a book, *Mathālib al-ʻArab* (*Faults of the Arabs*), which provided lists of Arabs who fell into a number of categories, often dubious: sodomites, thieves, bastards, fornicators, men who married their stepmothers; included in his book were five chapters which were devoted to notable men who were the children of different kinds of non-Muslim women: Ethiopians, Byzantines, Sindis, Nabateans and Jews.[1262] Before any debates or disputations held in the presence of a Caliph or Amīr took place or letters were sent back and forth between learned polemicists, there was this different and much, much more common type of

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[1259] I am not bringing the question of concubinage into this discussion, but the existence of Christian slave-girls/concubines only strengthens my point.

[1260] See the quotation in Vryonis, *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the eleventh through the fifteenth century* (Berkeley, 1986), pp. 487-488.

[1261] See Ibn Rusta, *al-Mujallad al-sābiʻ min Kitāb al-aʻlāq al-nafīsa* (Leiden, 1892), p. 213. For this point, see Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʻawiya Ier,' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 161, for discussion of the identities of these men, see *ibid*., 162.

[1262] See Hishām b. al-Kalbī, *Mathālib al-ʻArab* (Beirut/London, 1998), pp. 103-110.

Muslim-Christian interaction: this is a world where Muslim-Christian religious exchanges started at home.

Religiously-mixed households and families presented Muslims with a host of challenges whose echoes we can hear in legal discussions. How did one negotiate the shoals of religious difference when members of one's immediate and extended family belonged to a different religion? In the ninth century, for example, the famous jurist Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (d. 241 AH/AD 855), was asked about the case of a Muslim man who had *dhimmī* relatives and who would greet them with the Arabic '*al-salām 'alaykum*;' such a man, Aḥmad held, should greet them in Persian and should not initiate contact with them with this (Islamic) greeting.[1263]

Families that were multi-religious presented children with potentially thorny issues at the end of life. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath, for example, asked 'Umar and 'Uthmān what he should do about a paternal aunt of his who had died and who was Jewish.[1264] This was probably a question about whether and how he should take part in her funeral procession. In roughly the exact same period, Addai was asking Jacob of Edessa whether it was permissible for Christian women to take part in the funeral processions of pagan Harranians and Jews, something which Jacob permitted on account of love and human custom.[1265] Jacob also permitted pagans and Jews to take

[1263] See Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn b. Yazīd al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmi'*, vol. 2, (Riyadh, 1996), pp. 462-463 (nos. 1110-1112).

[1264] See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr* , vol. 5 (Leiden, 1905), p. 46. ET available in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), p. 41.

[1265] See Mardin 310, fol. 205a (p. 407): ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܦܐܐ ܕܢܐܙܠܢ ܢܫ̈ܐ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܝܬܐ: ܥܡ ܠܘܘܝܐ ܕܚܢܦܐ ܚܪ̈ܢܝܐ ܐܘ ܕܝܗ̈ܘܕܝܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܡܢ ܚܘܒܐ ܘܡܢܗܓܐ ܐܢܫܝܐ ܗܘܝܐ. ܘܠܐ ܡܫܟܚܝܢ ܢܛܪܝܢ ܚܬܝܬܘܬܐ ܥܕܡܐ ܠܗܪܟܐ 'Addai: Whether it is appropriate for Christian women to go with the funeral processions of pagan Harranians or Jews? Jacob: This, too, takes place on account of love and human custom and we cannot maintain precise [observance] up to this point.' Syriac text and LT also available in Lamy, *Dissertatio*, pp. 162-163.

part in Christian funeral processions.[1266] On the Islamic side of things, the treatment of the case of al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Allāh provides an example of the different ways that Muslims dealt with taking part in such funeral processions. Al-Ḥārith had a Muslim father and a Christian mother—Ibn Saʿd tells us about him that 'in him was blackness, because his mother was a Christian Abyssinian'[1267]—and there survive a number of varying reports about what exactly al-Ḥārith did upon his mother's death. According to one, members of Quraysh and other Muslims came to be present at her funeral procession, but al-Ḥārith told them that God had taken the obligation to attend away from them and that it would be more appropriate for members of her religious community to be in it than for them to be in it; as a result, they all left. Another report has al-Ḥārith finding out that his mother was a Christian only after her death, when a female servant secretly tells him that they discovered his mother wearing a cross when they undressed her to wash her body; in this report, it is once al-Ḥārith finds out about his mother's true identity that he tells Muslims that God has satisfied the obligation on their behalf and that it would be better for them to let her co-religionists be in the funeral procession. And, according to this version, al-Ḥārith's reputation increased for having done this. Yet another report has the Companions of the Prophet in the funeral procession and al-Ḥārith tells them that she has co-religionists other than them; in this report, however, there is no mention of Muslims departing from the procession, nor is

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[1266] Mardin 310, fol. 205a (p. 407): ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܢ ܕܢܫܡܥ ܐܦ ܠܚܢܦܐ ܐܦ ܠܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܕܨܒܝܢ ܕܢܐܙܠܘܢ ܥܡ ܠܘܝܢ. ܡܛܠܬܗ ܕܪܚܡܬ ܐܢܫܘܬܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܣܟܠܐ ܠܢ ܗܕܐ 'Addai: whether it is right for us to assent to pagans and Jews who want to go along with our funeral processions, on account of a love of humanity [sc. φιλανθρωπία]? Jacob: This matter does not do injury to us.' See also Kayser, *Die Canones Jacob's von Edessa*, p. 19: ܘܠܐ ܡܕܡ ܡܣܟܠܐ ܐܢ ܢܐܙܠܢ ܢܫܐ ܡܗܝܡܢܬܐ ܥܡ ܠܘܝܐ ܕܚܢܦܐ ܚܪܢܝܐ. ܐܘ ܝܗܘܕܝܐ ܐܘ ܐܢ ܢܐܙܠܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܒܠܘܝܢ. 'And there is nothing harmful if believing women go with the funeral procession of pagan Harranians or Jews, or if they [go] in our funeral processions.'

[1267] See Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 5 (Leiden, 1905), p. 19. ET available in Muhammad Ibn Saʿd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), p. 15.

there mention of al-Ḥārith's reputation increasing as a result of his actions.[1268] One last account, from Ibn Sa'd, has al-Ḥārith and a number of Muslims take part in the funeral procession, in addition to a number of Christians, but both groups are separate from one another.[1269]

These various permutations on what al-Ḥārith and other Muslims did about his Christian mother's funeral make it clear that there were varying answers to the question of how a Muslim should act when confronted by a question of whether and how to participate in funeral rituals when a non-Muslim family member passed away: depending on the report one took as authoritative, one might not take part in the funeral procession at all or one might attend, but be separate from non-Muslims. In the 'Abbasid period, when asked whether a Muslim could attend the funeral of a polytheist, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal would cite the example of al-Ḥārith attending but standing to one side as precedent for permitting Muslims to participate.[1270]

Ibn Ḥanbal's opinion was recorded in a collection of his opinions about matters relating to People of the Book made by al-Khallāl (d. 311 AH/ AD 923) and the range of questions asked there about only the issue of funerals and burial reflects a society in which Muslim and non-Muslim lived lives that were intertwined at the most intimate levels: A Jewish man dies who has a Muslim son, how should the son act? Abū Wā'il's (d. after 82 AH/ AD 701) mother died a Christian and he asked 'Umar what he should

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[1268] These reports are all conveniently collected in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 5 (Beirut, 1985), pp. 241-243. Quraysh present: from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (p. 241); al-Ḥārith discovers his mother is a Christian: also from al-Zubayr b. Bakkār, pp. 241-242; Companions of the Prophet accompany the body: from al-Bukhārī, p. 242.

[1269] This report is contained in al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 5, p. 243, but the text in Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 5 (Leiden, 1905), p. 19, is slightly better (reads *'alā ḥida* rather than *'alā ḥaddihi*). ET can be found in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), p. 15.

[1270] See Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khallāl, *Aḥkām ahl al-milal min al-jāmi' li-masā'il al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (Beirut, 1994), p. 220.

do.[1271] Qays b. Shammās's mother died a Christian and he wanted to attend her funeral; he asked the Prophet how he should act.[1272] Beyond the question of taking part in the funeral procession of non-Muslim family members, Aḥmad would be asked nearly identical questions to what Addai had asked Jacob perhaps 150 years previously: could a man who had a Muslim neighbor with a Christian mother follow along in the mother's funeral procession? How about attending the funeral of neighbors who were Christians? Could a Muslim man with a Christian mother follow along in her funeral procession? A Muslim man whose father died a Christian? In all these cases, Aḥmad would draw upon the precedent of al-Ḥārith and counsel that one could take part in the procession or attend the funeral, but that one should stand apart.[1273]

Religious intermarriage or inter-religious concubinage raised other interesting problems. A Muslim could make a Christian an executor:[1274] Ṣafiyya, the wife of Muḥammad, made one of her relatives who was a Christian an executor of her will;[1275] she also made a Jewish relative an executor.[1276] A Muslim could not be the heir of an unbeliever (*kāfir*) and an unbeliever could not be the heir of a Muslim;[1277] similarly, the Muslim could not inherit from a Jew or a Christian[1278] and Jews and Christians could not inherit from Muslims.[1279] A paternal aunt of al-Ash'ath b. Qays died, for example; she was a Jew. Al-Ash'ath went to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to seek her inheritance; 'Umar,

[1271] On Abū Wā'il, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 12 (Beirut, 1988), pp. 549-554.

[1272] All of these examples can be found in al-Khallāl, *Aḥkām ahl al-milal*, pp. 218-219. The answers to such questions involve taking part in the funeral procession, but riding ahead of it on an animal and not being behind it. The concern seems to be with maintaining both the separateness as well as the social precedence of the Muslim participant in the funeral procession.

[1273] al-Khallāl, *Aḥkām ahl al-milal*,pp. 219-220.

[1274] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 571 (no. 19461).

[1275] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 571 (no. 19462).

[1276] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 571 (no. 19464).

[1277] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 563 (nos. 19423, 194246).

[1278] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 563 (no. 4247).

[1279] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 564 (nos. 19429, 19430).

however, refused to give it to him and instead granted it to Jews.[1280] Death brought out in other vivid ways some of the conundrums intermarriage might raise: Where should a Christian woman who dies while pregnant with a Muslim's child be buried—in a Muslim cemetery or in a Christian one?[1281]

Non-Muslim wives or slave girls who maintained their Christian (or Jewish) observance might represent a religious predicament for Muslim husbands or masters. Al-Awzāʿī (d. 157 AH/AD 774), a Syrian legal expert whose views represent some of the earliest legal opinions we have preserved in the Islamic tradition[1282] was asked about a Muslim man who had a Christian slave girl. Could he forbid her from going to church, or should he permit her to do so? Was it possible for him to forbid her from making pilgrimage to Christian holy places (*al-ziyārāt*) or should he give her permission? Al-Awzāʿī's response allowed the master plenty of freedom: he saw no harm in forbidding her from doing these things; equally, however, he also saw no harm from giving her permission to do them, either. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, on the other hand, while holding that the Muslim master should not forbid her from making pilgrimages (*la yamnaʿuhā min ahl al-ziyārāt*), maintained that the master should not give the slave girl permission to go to church.[1283]

A series of questions posed to Aḥmad offer us a glimpse at some of the issues which a Muslim husband had to deal with if he took a Christian for his wife. Could the Muslim husband, Aḥmad was asked, forbid his wife from drinking wine? He could

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1280 See ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), pp. 563-564 (no. 19426).

1281 al-Khallāl, *Aḥkām ahl al-milal*, pp. 220-223. The responses that were given to this question included: she could be buried in a Muslim cemetery; she could be buried in a Christian cemetery; she could be buried separately in a place between Christian and Muslim cemeteries.

1282 See J. Schacht's article 'al-Awzāʿī, Abū ʿAmr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAmr,' in *EI²*.

1283 al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmiʿ*, vol. 2, p. 431 (no. 1001).

order her to not drink wine, Aḥmad responded; if she refused to accept his order, however, the husband could not forbid her from drinking. Another question: Could the husband forbid the wife from leaving the house to go to church? ‘As for her leaving [the house],’ Aḥmad held, ‘it is not right for her to go out and he has the right to forbid her, because it is not appropriate for her to leave, save with his permission.’ Could the husband forbid his Christian wife from bringing a cross into the house? Similar to the case of drinking wine, Aḥmad held that the husband might order her not to bring a cross in, but if the Christian wife did not accept his order, he could not forbid her. Abū ‘Iṣām’s solution, which Aḥmad thought was a good one, was to stipulate before marriage that the Christian wife not drink wine or go to church.[1284]

In addition to questions about going to church, wine and crosses, there was the issue of whether a Muslim husband should let his Christian wife go to festivals celebrating Christian saints—Aḥmad said no.[1285] Related to the issue of a Christian wife was the issue of a Christian slave girl: when Aḥmad was asked whether the Muslim should grant permission to his Christian slave girl to go the celebration of Christian feast days, or to church, or to Christian gatherings, he held that her master should not permit her.[1286] What is more, the Muslim master or husband should not buy a *zunnār*—the belt which People of the Book were required to wear—for his Christian wife or slave girl; she should go out and buy it herself.[1287]

[1284] See Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Hārūn b. Yazīd al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmi*‘, vol. 2, (Riyadh, 1996), p. 430 (no. 997).

[1285] al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmi*‘, vol. 2, p. 431 (no. 10000).

[1286] al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmi*‘, vol. 2, p. 430 (no. 998).

[1287] al-Khallāl, *Ahl al-milal wa-'l-ridda wa-'l-zanādiqa wa-tārik 'l-ṣalāt wa-'l-farā'iḍ min Kitāb al-Jāmi*‘, vol. 2, p. 431 (no. 1002).

In the fourteenth century, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (d. 751 AH/AD 1350) would expand Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal's discussions about what a Muslim husband or master could or could not control in the religious observation of his non-Muslim wife. According to Ibn al-Qayyim, the Muslim husband was not permitted to forbid his non-Muslim wife from undertaking fasts which she believed were obligatory (even if it meant that he could not have sex with her when he wanted), nor could he forbid her from praying towards the east in his house. The Muslim husband was not permitted to compel his Jewish wife to break the Sabbath and he could not force his wives to eat food which their religions forbade; as to whether he could forbid that his wife from eat pork, there were two different opinions. Similarly, there were two opinions to whether he could forbid her—if she wanted—from observing the fast of Ramadan with him. And so it went. Among other things the Muslim husband could not prevent the non-Muslim wife from doing, according to Ibn al-Qayyim, was reading her scripture, so long as she did not raise her voice as she did.[1288]

Intermarriage between Muslim men and non-Muslim women no doubt played a significant role in introducing a number of non- and pre-Islamic religious practices into the bloodstream of popular Islam. Khālid al-Qasrī (d. AH 126/AD 743-744), for example, was the governor of Iraq and had a Christian mother. While governor, Khalid built her a church in Kufa, located behind the great mosque; the sounds of the *nāqūs* and chanting from Khālid's church would compete with the call to prayer and the preaching in the mosque.[1289] What is more, after building a fountain in that mosque,

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[1288] For these points (and others), see Shams al-Dīn Abī ʻAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Aḥkām ahl al-dhimma*, vol. 1, (Beirut, 1995), p. 316.

[1289] For this, see A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of ʻUmar* (London, 1930), pp. 45-46.

Khālid had a priest bless it on the grounds that the priest's prayer would be more effective than even that of 'Alī; Khālid was also supposed to have stated that Christianity was a better religion than Islam and was said to have favored Christians and other non-Muslims over Muslims in appointments to public office and in adjudicating disputes.[1290] Maysūn, the Christian wife of Mu'āwiya whom I mentioned above, was the mother of Yazīd, who succeeded his father as Caliph. Yazīd was raised in the area of Palmyra, among the Arabs of his mother's tribe, Kalb, which was composed of Christians and recent converts to Islam; this formation has been connected to Yazīd's later behavior as Caliph.[1291] According to the *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, Yazīd's boon companions were Sarjūn (the father of John of Damascus) and the Christian poet al-Akhṭal; Yazīd was also said to have been the first Caliph in Islam to introduce musical instruments, to welcome singers and to show immorality and drink wine.[1292]

The traditional concern of most students of Islam and Christianity, however, has not been popular ritual and practice, but rather doctrine and belief, a focus which corresponds to the assumption that doctrine is the most important part of a religious system. For this reason, a more controversial question, one which is perhaps unanswerable, is of the effect that widespread intermarriage between Muslim men and

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[1290] For all these points, see G.R. Hawting's article, 'Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ḳasrī' in *EI*[2]. See also Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Mo'awiya I[er],' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 162.

[1291] See Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Mo'awiya I[er],' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 190.

[1292] *Awwal man sanna al-malāhī fī 'l-Islām min al-khulafā'* might also mean 'the first of the Caliphs to pursue amusements in Islam.' See *Kitāb al-aghānī*, vol. 16, p. 70. Lammens, 'Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Mo'awiya I[er],' *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 247, sees this as an exaggeration and an anti-Syrian/Umayyad slander (also, cf. his translation (along with his note on p. 272, n. 1)). Lammens also suggests, pp. 258-259, that the Sarjūn in this text should be actually understood to be John Damascene and not his father, who would have been too old by the reign of Yazīd to be the drinking companion of a young Caliph.

non-Muslim women had on the normative, textual Islam which forms the focus of much of Western Islamic studies. It would not be surprising if close interaction with Christians affected the religious beliefs of certain Muslims, even among the literate elite. Ibn al-Rāwandī (d. 4th century AH/10th century AD) wrote that no less than the great al-Naẓẓām (d. 221 AH/ AD 836), 'the head of the Mu'tazilites, despite the elevation of his level in theology (*kalām*) and his ability and authority in knowledge' composed a book on the superiority of Trinitarianism over unitarianism for a Christian boy whom he loved passionately (*'ashiqahu*) as a means of acquiring from the boy 'what God had forbidden.'[1293] Al-Jāḥiẓ, the student of al-Naẓẓām, certainly held that Christianity was a fertile breeding ground for all sorts of unbelief. 'Their religion,' he said of the Christians,

> ...resembles in certain of its manifestations the doctrine of the materialists (*al-dahriyya*), and they are among the causes of all confusion and doubt. Indicative of this is that we have never seen a religious group which is more unbelieving (*akthar zandaqatan*) than the Christians—or more confused or befuddled than they. Such is the case of all those who have looked into obscure matters with weak intellects. Do you not see that most of those who have been killed in unbelief (*zandaqa*)—of those who profess Islam and show it externally—are those whose fathers and mothers are Christians?[1294]

The 'Pact of 'Umar' had Christians promising that they would not speak the language of the Muslims and that they would not show crosses or any of their religious books in the streets of the Muslims or in their markets; a safe assumption would be that Christians were doing just this.[1295] In the last chapter, I mentioned that Jacob of Edessa saw no

[1293] See Abū Muḥammad 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Sa'īd b. Ḥazm, *Ṭawq al-ḥamāma* (Cairo, 1950), p. 130. cf. J. van Ess's article, 'ABŪ ESḤĀQ EBRĀHĪM B. SAYYĀR B. HĀNEʾ AL-NAẒẒĀM,' in the *Encyclopedia Iranica* vol. 1, (London/Boston/Henley, 1985), pp. 275-280, story cited on p. 276.

[1294] See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1344), p. 17 (from *Fī 'l-radd 'alā al-Naṣārā*).

[1295] *Wa-lā natakallamu bi-kalāmihim...wa-lā nuẓhiru ṣalīban wa-lā kutuban min kutub dīninā fī shay' min ṭuruq al-Muslimīn wa-lā aswāqihim.* See Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* (Cairo, 1950), p. 121.

harm in Christian priests teaching the children of Hagarenes (he had no problem, either, with priests teaching the children of Jews and pagan Harranians),[1296] a phenomenon which I suggested could in part be attributed to families where at least one parent was a Christian or where the parents were converts to Islam who held on to much of their previous Christian baggage, so to speak. By the time we get to Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal in third/ninth century Baghdad, he was being asked about a Muslim who was teaching Qur'ān to the children of a Magian, a Jew and a Christian, something which did not please Aḥmad when he learned about it.[1297]

The children of Muslim men were supposed to be Muslims, but this might not have always been the case and, to repeat a point I have already made, we should not underestimate the importance and role Christian mothers played in the formation of their Muslim children's religious identities. We should not let the eventual overwhelming Islamization of the Middle East, something which people in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries had no way of knowing about, mislead us into thinking that each conversion to Islam meant that an irrevocable step had been taken or that contemporaries viewed such conversions as having permanent effects.

The story of the martyr Bakchos the Younger provides a late-eighth century example from Maiouma in Palestine of the sort of conflicts and hybrid identities which might result from conversions and inter-religious marriages. Bakchos' father, we are told, had been a Christian, as was his mother, 'but having been ensnared and drawn in

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1296 See Lamy, *Dissertatio*, p. 158: ܐܕܝ: ܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܠܗ ܠܟܗܢܐ ܕܢܠܦ ܠܚܢܦܐ ܒܢܝ̈ ܚܪ̈ܢܝܐ ܘܒܢܝ̈ ܝܗܘ̈ܕܝܐ ܗ ܩܪܝܢܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܘܗܝ ܕܢܐܠܦܘܢ ܠܡܟܬܒ. ܝܥܩܘܒ: ܘܐܦ ܗܕܐ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܝ ܕܝܠܗ ܕܙܢܐ ܠܐ ܡܣܟܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܐܢ ܐܦ ܕܐܬܚܙܝ. ܐܦܢ ܢܠܦ ܐܢܘܢ ܡܙܡܘܪ̈ܐ ܘܟܬܒ̈ܐ܀ 'Addai: Whether it is right for a priest only to teach pagans, the children of Harranians, and the children of Jews reading, and also that they learn how to write? Jacob: I judge that this, too, is of the same sort of thing—which does no harm—even if he teaches them the Psalms and the Scriptures.'

1297 See al-Khallāl, pp. 120-121.

with Satanic enticements, he abandoned the holy worship of the Christians and drew near to the foul worship of the Hagarenes.'[1298] After his conversion, the renegade would go on to have seven children whom he raised and taught in accordance with the custom of his new religion; his wife, however, was distressed at the new confession and would regularly attend Christian churches in secret where she would, the martyrdom reports, beseech God that she be separated from her husband and that she and her children be joined to the Christian church. Bakchos himself was the third of the seven children and was given the name Ḍaḥḥāk at birth. He remained unmarried, according to the martyrdom, not because he refused to have anything to do with marriage, but because he wanted to become a Christian and be married to Christ by means of taking up the monastic way of life. Bakchos' desire to become a Christian no doubt had something to do with his mother's own secret Christianity and her wish that her children all convert to Christianity from Islam. When his father died, Bakchos reported his yearning to become a Christian to his mother, who rejoiced at what he told her. Bakchos went to Jerusalem where he met a monk at the Church of the Resurrection, a meeting which eventually led to his getting baptized at the lavra of St Sabas and receiving his new, Christian name. Later, Bakchos' mother came to Jerusalem to see the True Cross and also desiring to see her son, whom she found. Bakchos told her of his conversion to Christianity, his baptism and his taking up of the monastic garment: '"At

[1298] F. A. Demetrakopoulou, '῞Αγιος Βάκχος ὁ Νέος,' *Epistēmonikē epetēris tēs Philosophikēs Scholēs tou Panepistēmiou Athēnōn* 26 (1977-1978), p. 344: 'Σατανικοῖος δὲ οὗτος δελεάσμασι παγιδευτεὶς καὶ συνελκυσθείς, τῆς ἱερᾶς τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀποστὰς λατρείας, τῇ μυσαρᾷ τῶν Ἀγαρηνῶν προσῆλθε λατρείᾳ·' For a summary of this martyrdom/life, see C. Foss, 'Byzantine Saints in Early Islamic Syria,' *Analecta Bollandiana* 125 (2007), pp. 116-117.

last," he said, "by means of your prayers, O mother, I put into effect everything I long for without obstruction."'[1299]

When Bakchos' mother returned to Maiouma, she reported to her other children everything she had seen and all his holy ways: 'He suffers greatly and is grieved,' she told them, 'at our false doctrine.'[1300] At this point, they sold their belongings and all moved to a different region where they were baptized, along with their wives and children. The wife of one of Bakchos's brothers, however, did not go along with this family conversion, but instead left and 'made everything clear to the unbelievers.' This news of apostasy, we are told, outraged the Muslims, who paid a man who was, according to the martyrdom, thought to be a Christian but really a renegade to go about churches and monasteries looking for Bakchos.[1301] Having been tasked with finding Bakchos/Ḍaḥḥāk, the crypto-Muslim headed for Jerusalem, where, 'secretly and deceitfully walking up and down its squares,' he looked about for Bakchos. At last the man spotted Bakchos, having offered up a prayer and entering the Church of the Resurrection. 'He is one of us!' the agent shouted out, grabbing him by the shoulder and the back, 'He felt a disgust at our faith and has become a Christian. Look! He is even clothed with a monastic garment!'[1302] At this point, the martyrdom takes a predictable path: Bakchos is put in prison and eventually taken before a Muslim ruler

[1299] Demetrakopoulou, "Ἅγιος Βάκχος ὁ Νέος,' p. 347: «ἐπὶ τέλους», φησίν, «εὐχαῖς σου, ὦ μῆτερ, ὁδηγούμενος πάντα τὰ ἐμοὶ ἐράσμια ἀνεμποδίστως»

[1300] Demetrakopoulou, "Ἅγιος Βάκχος ὁ Νέος,' p. 347: λίαν ἀλγεῖ καὶ ἀνιᾶται περὶ τῆς ὑμῶν κακοδοξίας

[1301] Demetrakopoulou, "Ἅγιος Βάκχος ὁ Νέος,' p. 347: ἀπελθοῦσα δῆλα τοῖς ἀπίστοις πάντα πεποίηκεν

[1302] Demetrakopoulou, "Ἅγιος Βάκχος ὁ Νέος,' p. 347 (first quote): Οὗτος οὖν ὁ πονηρὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ διάβολος ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις γενόμενος καὶ τὰς πλατείας ἀναπατῶν περιεσκόπει ὑπούλως καὶ δολίως. Second quote, p. 348: ὁμόφυλος ἡμῖν ὤν, βδελυξάμενος τὴν καθ' ἡμᾶς πίστιν χριστιανὸς γέγονε καὶ ἰδοὺ καὶ μοναδικὸν ἐνδιδὺσκεται ἔνδυμα

who tries unsuccessfully to persuade him to come back to his 'ancestral faith.' In the end, Backchos was beheaded for his apostasy.

Worries about how literally we should be reading such accounts should not deter us from recognizing that this one martyrdom presents us with a whole spectrum of possible Christian responses to the religious opportunities presented by Islam in the early 'Islamic' period: Ḍaḥḥāk/Bakchos' father, who converted for unspecified reasons; his mother, who followed her husband into Islam but who clung to a secret Christian observance; the children whose subsequent paths in life suggest that their religious identities were, if not confused, then not rock solid. If Bakchos' mother had actually been a secret Christian, as the martyrdom reports, it would be hard to imagine that her children would not be aware of their mother's attachment to her previous religion. The children themselves obviously had an affection for Christianity which was in no doubt at least partially the result of their mother's influence: Ḍaḥḥāk/Bakchos was baptized and became a monk and credited his mother's prayers with helping him achieve what he desired. Moreover, all the rest of his siblings followed his example and were baptized as well. It should also be pointed out that the same pattern of tensions created by Christian-Muslim marriages played itself out at the other end of the Muslim world, in al-Andalus, where we also find a number of Christian martyrs who came from religiously mixed families.[1303]

Perhaps most interestingly, the particular martyrdom in question provides us with another example of a possible Christian response to Islam—the Christian who, as it were, played it both ways—being a Christian when it suited him and being a Muslim

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[1303] See A. Christys, *Christians in Al-Andalus: (711-1000)*, (Richmond, 2002), pp. 52-53.

when it suited him, in this case, in exchange for money from the Muslim rulers. Here we have an example of a confessional code switcher like we encountered in Chapter 4, but rather than switching identities between different versions of Christianity, this figure was switching between Christianity and Islam as expediency dictated. We should not forget that as time progressed and conversions gradually piled up, the Muslim community of the early medieval and medieval Middle East was increasingly a convert community. But, if the arguments of my previous chapter were in any way persuasive, this is how we should view the Muslim community in the Middle East from the very beginning of the conquest period. The shifting allegiances and mixed identities that can be seen in the martyrdom of Bakchos must have been commonplace.

The Practice of Everyday Life

Apart from intermarriage and religiously hybrid families, however, everyday life presented a myriad of opportunities for Muslims to come into contact with non-Muslims on a constant basis. Again, to return to the demographic realities I have stressed, such contact must have been unavoidable for Muslim settlers and immigrants living in garrison cities and pre-Islamic settlements throughout the Fertile Crescent where they would have often been a tiny minority, even in the places they were dwelling. And this contact was of the most literal kind as well: in his collection of ḥadīth, ʿAbd al-Razzāq included a section on 'Shaking the Hand of the People of the Book' (*muṣāfaḥat ahl al-kitāb*): there was, it seems, a question as to whether it was appropriate for Muslim and Christian to do just this—ʿAbd Allāh b. Muḥayrīz, for example, (d. early second century AH/eighth century AD) was seen in Damascus

shaking the hand of a Christian.[1304] Some saw no harm in shaking hands (*muṣāfaḥa*) with Jews or Christians, but other Muslims disapproved of eating with them or engaging in any such hand shaking.[1305] Despite disapproval from some quarters, the very existence of the question and of an anecdote like the one reporting the behavior of ʻAbd Allāh b. Muḥayrīz points to the reality that such interreligious contact of this most literal kind was happening. Similarly, despite disapproval of Muslims eating with Christians and Jews, as we saw in the last chapter, it seems that Muslims were initiating such interaction in at least some cases: Addai wrote to Jacob of Edessa to ask how the steward of a monastery should proceed if he were commanded by an Amīr to eat with him from the same bowl.[1306]

There were other points of quotidian contact. In addition to families in which Muslims and non-Muslims lived together, Muslims and non-Muslims were living together who were not connected by marriage. In the second/eighth century in Ayla, Yazīd b. Abī Sumayya was known as a person who would pray the entire night while weeping. 'There was living with him in [his] house,' Ibn Saʻd reported, 'a Jewish woman who would weep out of mercy for him. And so one night in his supplication he said, "O God, this Jewish woman has wept out of mercy for me and her religion disagrees with mine. How much more then should you have mercy on me!"'[1307] Living in Basra in the

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[1304] ʻAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6 (Beirut, 1973), p. 117 (no. 10173). On ʻAbd Allāh b. Muḥayrīz, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 16 (Beirut, 1992), pp. 106-110. He died either in the Caliphate of ʻUmar b. ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz or in the caliphate of al-Walīd b. ʻAbd al-Malik.

[1305] ʻAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 6 (Beirut, 1973), p. 117 (disapprove: no. 10174; approve: 10175).

[1306] See n. 1075 above.

[1307] *Fa-Anta awlā bi-raḥmatī.* I am grateful to Yossi Witztum and Luke Yarbrough for helping me with this translation. See Ibn Saʻd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 206; with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Saʻd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), p. 322. On Yazīd b. Abī Sumayya, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 32 (Beirut, 1992), pp. 151-152.

second/eighth century, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAwn b. Arṭabān had a house in the marketplace in which Christians and Muslims both lived; he lived there as well. ‘He would say,’ according to Ibn Saʿd, ‘“Let Christians be below me; Muslims should not be below me.” And he dwelt in the top of his house.’[1308]

And there was more. Without going into too great detail, one could mention scribes,[1309] the army[1310] (even in Muslim *ghazw*s against non-Muslims),[1311] sailors and

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Al-Mizzī does not give a date for Yazīd’s death, but I take him as a second/eighth century figure based on the people whom he transmitted from, e.g. ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz.

[1308] See Ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol 7, pt. 2 (Leiden, 1918), p. 36; with reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Saʿd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 1, trans. A. Bewley (London, 1997), p. 163.

[1309] See the biographical dictionary of Christian scribes and wazirs compiled by L. Cheikho, *Wuzarāʾ al-naṣrāniyya wa-kuttābuhā fī ʾl-Islām: 622-1517*, (Jouniyeh, Lebanon, 1987). A read through al-Jahshiyārī’s (d. AH 331) *Kitāb al-wuzarāʾ wa-ʾl-kuttāb* (Cairo, 1938), shows many examples of scribes who were Christians or *mawālī*. A.S. Tritton, *The Caliphs and their Non-Muslim Subjects: A Critical Study of the Covenant of ʿUmar* (London, 1930), pp. 18-36 presents a large amount of evidence from a variety of sources of widespread Christian participation in Muslim administration.

[1310] See, e.g., P. Crone, *Slaves on Horses: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 37-38; Lammens, ‘Études sur le règne du calife Omaiyade Moʿawiya Ier,’ *Mélanges de la Faculté orientale/Université Saint-Joseph*, 3.1 (1908), p. 299; See also the canon of Jacob of Edessa on clergy who were forced to fight in the armies of the Muslims, Mardin 310, fols. 215b-216a (pp. 429-429): ܐܕܝ، ܟܕ
ܡܬܬܟܬܫ ܗܘܐ ܚܣܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܝܠܢ ܕܒܬܚܘܡܐ ܡܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܡܢ ܠܒܪ. ܦܩܕܘ ܛܝܝܐ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܫܠܝܛܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܓܘ. ܕܟܠܢܫ
ܢܦܩܘܢ ܠܫܘܪܐ ܠܩܪܒܐ. ܘܠܐ ܫܒܩܘ ܐܢܫ ܕܠܐ ܐܦܩܘܗܝ. ܐܦܠܐ ܟܗܢܐ. ܡܛܠ ܩܫܝܫܐ ܐܘ ܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܕܟܕ ܩܫܝ
ܩܪܒܐ: ܫܕܐ ܟܐܦܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܪܐ ܘܡܚܝܗ ܘܩܛܠ ܠܚܕ ܡܢ ܡܩܪܒܢܐ ܕܣܠܩܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܠܡܣܩ ܒܫܘܪܐ. ܐܝܟ ܕܙܕܩ ܠܗ
ܡܢ ܩܢܘܢܐ. ܘܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܚܛܗܐ ܒܥܐ ܐܢܐ ܕܐܠܦ. ܐܘ ܠܗ ܐܘ ܠܟܗܢܐ ܐܚܪܢܐ ܘܕܝܪܝܐ: ܕܟܕ ܠܐ
ܒܨܒܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܡܬܐܣܪܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܚܒܠܐ ܕܡܐܢܓܢܝܩܘܢ ܕܩܪܒܐ: ܘܫܕܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܟܐܦܐ ܘܩܛܠܝܢ ܡܢ ܡܩܪܒܢܐ ܕܠܩܘܒܠ.
ܘܐܢ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܫܡܫܘܢ ܒܟܗܢܘܬܐ ܘܐܢ ܫܦܝܪ ܕܠܙܒܢܐ ܩܠܝܠ ܙܕܩ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܢܗܘܘܢ ܕ[...] ܩܢܘܢܐ ܝܥܩܘܒ ܗܝ ܕܟܕ
ܠܐ ܒܨܒܝܢ ܡܬܐܠܨܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܒܩܛܝܪܐ ܘܢܦܩܝܢ. ܚܐܪܐ ܡܚܘܝܐ ܠܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܗܠܝܢ ܕܡܬܥܒܕ̈ܢ ܗܘ̈ܝ. ܘܡܛܠ
ܒܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܕܐܦܝܣܩܘܦܗܘܢ ܐܝܬܝܗ. ܕܢܬܚܫܚ ܒܚܢܢܐ ܥܡܗܘܢ. ܘܢܦܩܘܕ ܠܗܘܢ ܬܫܡܫܬܗܘܢ ܐܝܟܢܐ
ܕܬܬܚܫܚ ܠܗ. ܗܘ ܒܪܢܫܐ ܕܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܗܘ ܕܫܕܐ ܟܐܦܐ ܡܢ ܫܘܪܐ ܘܩܛܠ ܚܕ ܡܢ ܩܪ̈ܒܬܢܐ، ܣܢܝ̈ܐ ܗܘ̈ܝ، ܘܫܕܐ
ܠܗܘ ܕܠܐ ܩܛܠ: ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܕܒܢܐ ܕܫܪܟܐ ܕܡܬܦܠܓܐ ܡܢ ܬܫܡܫܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܕܠܡܬܬܘܣܦܬܐ. ܠܬܐܪܬܐ ܕܠܗ
ܕܡܫܡܫܢܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܬܟܪܟ. ܕܐܘ ܢܫܡܫ ܐܘ ܠܐ. ܗܝ ܕܝܢ ܬܗܘܐ ܕܐܢ ܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܚܛܗܐ ܐܘ ܠܐ. ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܒܥ
ܬܫܐܠ ܥܕܬܐ. ܐܠܐ ܬܬܒܥ ܗܕܐ ܠܒܪܢܫܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܝܠܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗ ܗܘ ܢܦܫܐ ܘܚܫܢܐ ܕܟܠ
ʿAddai: When our citadel on the frontiers was being attacked by those from outside, the Arabs who were ruling inside ordered that everyone go out to the wall for the battle and they did not leave behind anyone whom they did not bring out, not even priests. In the case of a priest or a deacon who, when the battle grew fierce, threw a stone from the wall and struck and killed one of the fighters who was attempting to go up the wall, what does he deserve from the canons? Does he have a sin [in this]? I want to learn. Or, with respect to him, or or other priests and monks who, unwillingly were tied up with the ropes of a war machine (μαγγανικόν) and were throwing rocks and killing some opposing warriors, should they serve in the priesthood, or is it right that for a short time they be [...] the canon? Jacob: The fact that they acted unwillingly under compulsion and went out shows them to be free from these things which were done and therefore it is under the authority of their bishop to use mercy with them and

workmen,[1312] inter-religious debates,[1313] or even the important role that Christians played as copyists of the Qur'ān in the early period, as examples.[1314] What is more, when Christians had disputes with one another, they had the option of going before Muslim rulers for adjudication: perhaps unsurprisingly, the austere Jacob of Edessa issued a canon forbidding the clergy from taking their disagreements before worldly authorities.[1315] But they were doing just this: "Umar wrote to 'Uday b. 'Uday,' one

allow them their service when it seems good to him. As for the deed of the priest who threw a stone from the wall when his eyes were looking and seeing the one whom he killed: after a fixed time in which he is held back from service for the purpose of repentance, the priest should be left to his conscience as to whether he will serve or not. Now as for the question as to whether they have sinned or not, it should not fall as a question. Rather this should be given to just judges and to the impartiality of God, the Knower and Searcher of all.' Harvard 93, fol. 29a: reads *ḥasyā* not *ḥesnā*. For the different attitudes Christian Arab tribes took vis-à-vis the Arab conquests, see M. A. Khrīsāt, 'Dawr al-'Arab al-mutanaṣṣira fī 'l-futūḥāt,' in *Proceedings of the Second Symposium on the History of Bilad al-Sham During the Early Islamic Period up to 40 A.H./640 A.D.*, ed. M.A. Bakhit and I. Abbas (Amman, 1987), pp. 135-164.

1311 See the series of questions about whether *dhimmī*s who take part in raids (*ghazā*) with Muslims get a share in the spoils, in Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khallāl, *Aḥkām ahl al-milal min al-jāmi' li-masā'il al-Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* (Beirut, 1994), pp. 232-234.

1312 See H.I. Bell and W.E. Crum, edd., *Greek Papyri in the British Museum. Catalogue, with Texts. Vol. IV: The Aphrodito Papyri* (London, 1910), pp. 435-450, for Coptic papyri showing men being conscripted and sent to serve as sailors on Muslim boats that were engaged in raiding in the Mediterranean and also to serve in official government building projects; pp. xxxii-xxxv, explains how the *cursus* worked and the mixture between Arab fighters and Egyptian sailors on board the ships.

1313 For a listing of such debates and their records, see the various bibliographies in the periodical *Islamochristiana* beginning with R. Caspar, A. Charfi, M. de Epalza, A.T. Khoury and P. Khoury, 'Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien,' *Islamochristiana* 1 (1975), pp. 125-181 and R. Caspar, A. Charfi, A.T. Khoury and K. Samir, 'Bibliographie du dialogue islamo-chrétien,' *Islamochristiana* 2 (1976), pp. 187-249, etc.

1314 For this, see M.J. Kister, '*Lā yamassuhu illā 'l-muṭahharūn...* Notes on the Interpretations of a Qur'ānic Phrase,' *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 34 (2008), pp. 330-331.

1315 Mardin 310, fols. 212a-212b: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܩܠܝܪ̈ܝܩܐ ܐܘ ܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ ܕܡܬܚܣܪܝܢ ܡܕܡ. ܕܠܡܢ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܢ ܕܒܥܠܕܝܢܐ ܐܘ ܠܡܢ ܫܪܟܐ: ܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ ܠܩܕܡ ܕܐܝܬ ܥܠܝܗܘܢ ܡܥܠܝܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܘ ܕܢܩܘܢ ܫܠܝܛܝܢ، ܠܗܘ ܡܢ ܕܐܡܪ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܠܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܠܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܢܥܠܘܢ ܐܢܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܦܝܣܘܢ ܘܢܬܟܫܦܘܢ ܘܢܬܪܥܘܢ ܒܥܕܬܐ ܘܒܦܐܝܘܬ ܘܒܟܐܢܘܬܐ ܘܒܕܝܠܬ ܐܠܗܐ: ܘܐܝܟ ܕܦܐܐ ܠܐܚ̈ܐ ܕܒܡܫܝܚܐ ܗܦܟܘ ܡܢ ܟܠܗ ܥܩܒܢܐ ܘܡܫܝܢܘܬܐ: ܡܛܠ ܕܒܢ̈ܝ ܒܝܬܐ. ܐܝܟ ܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܕܫܠܝܚܐ ܦܘܠܘܣ. ܐܡܪ ܓܝܪ ܟܕ ܪܓܙ ܘܡܟܣܣ ܠܗܘܢ ܠܩܘܪ̈ܢܬܝܐ ܕܫܠܡܘܬܐ ܐܝܟ ܗܘܝܐ ܡܫܬܟܠܝܢ. ܕܡܢܗܘܢ ܐܚܪ ܡܢܟܘܢ ܐܚܪܢ، ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗ ܕܝܢܐ ܥܡ ܐܚܘܗܝ. ܕܢܕܘܢ ܩܕܡ ܥܘ̈ܠܐ. ܘܠܐ ܩܕܡ ܩܕܝ̈ܫܐ. ܘܟܕ ܗܠܝܢ ܐܡܠܝ. ܠܗܠ ܬܚܘܬܐ ܕܫܘܠܛܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ. ܐܢ ܡܚܝܠ ܠܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܗܕܐ ܦܩܕ ܗܘܐ. ܒܟܢܐ ܕܡܬܐܡܪ ܠܩܠܝܪ̈ܝܩܐ ܘܠܕܝܪ̈ܝܐ: ܠܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܠܡܢ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܢ ܕܒܥܠܕܝܢܐ ܢܩܪܒܘܢ ܠܩܕܡ ܕܢܕܘܢ. ܘܐܡܪܢܐ ܕܐܡܪ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܗܢ ܕܕܘܟܝ. ܐܢ ܗܘ ܕܕܝ̈ܪܝܐ ܐܬܕܝܢܘܢ ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܬ ܠܗܘܢ ܕܝܢܐ. ܘܐܦܠܐ ܕܬܬܕܪܫܘܢ ܕܢܕܘܢ ܥܠ ܟܠܗ ܙܕܩ ܠܗܘܢ. ܐܠܐ ܐܢ ܫܡܥܝܢܐܝܬ ܒܫܝܢܐ ܢܬܕܪܐ. ܗܘ ܡܚܝܠ ܕܒܪ ܐܢܫ ܠܗ ܕܝܢܐ ܡܢܗ ܕܐܝܟ ܗܘܝܐ: ܐܢ ܩܠܝܪܝܩܐ ܘܐܢ ܕܝܪܝܐ ܕܡܬܕܝܢ ܠܗ ܩܕܡ ܐܢܫܝܢ ܥܠܘܗܝ؛ ܘܡܫܠܡ ܕܠܡܢ ܕܪ̈ܫܝܢ ܕܒܥܠܕܝܢܐ ܢܦܩ ܕܢܕܘܢ: ܘܠܡܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܘܠܟܗ̈ܢܐ ܢܥܠ ܠܐܢܫܝܢ. ܐܝܟ ܒܠܒܕܒܟܐ ܕܡܫܝܚܐ ܕܡܫܝܚ̈ܝܐ ܙܕܩ ܕܬܬܕܪܫ. ܘܡܩܒܠܢܘܬܐ ܕܠܚܡܐ ܠܡܫܠܡܘܬܗ ܙܕܩ ܕܢܦܩܘܢ ܡܢ ܡܢܝܢܐ ܕܬܕܝܪ̈ܐ܀ 'It is not right for clergymen or monks who lose something to bring those against whom they have a claim before the rulers of the world or before the pagans, as they have

report states, '"If the People of the Book come to you, judge between them."'[1316] It is also worth mentioning that by the Geniza period a whole host of business partnerships between Muslims and non-Muslims had become utterly commonplace.[1317]

Monasteries and Festivals

Another important place where Muslims were coming into contact not just with Christians but with Christian religious institutions and practices was the monastery. 'I have met a large number of monks known for the forcefulness of their asceticism and the abundance of their knowledge,' 'Abd Allāh b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī, the Muslim correspondent of the Christian apologist al-Kindī, wrote. 'And I have entered into many cloisters and monasteries and Christian churches and attended their prayers—the lengthy seven which they call "the prayers of the hours."' Al-Hāshimī would go on to name and describe the different offices of the hours and Christian feast days and sacraments: 'For this, all of it, I have been present and witnessed its practitioners and known and been aware of it.'[1318] Although the letter of al-Ḥāshimī may have actually

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taken that which has been lost, nor to turn them over to whippings and scourgings. Instead, they should adjudicate and try their matter modestly and chastely and with justice and piety and as is meet for brothers in Christ, apart from all disturbance and blows, before members of the Church, according to the commandment of the Holy Apostle (1 Corinthians 6:1-6). For criticizing and reprimanding them, he says to those who are foolishly making an error like this, 'Has one of you acted brazenly when, having a case against his brother, they have gone to court before the outsiders and not before the Church?' And although he was saying these things to Christian laymen, if he was commanding Christian laypeople in this way, how much more in the case of clergy and monks is it not right that they should take their legal adversaries before secular rulers? How can he speak of everything which is right if it is the case that it is monks who are the ones who have a legal case and it is not at all right that they should demand their justice? Instead, if there is love among them, if he has some kind of case like this—be he a clergyman or a monk, who has destroyed something of his—and he dares to bring his case before secular judges and to turn his brother over to blows and scourging, he should be judged as an enemy of the law of Christ, and he should receive from the ecclesiastical canons a rebuke which is fitting for his error.' I am grateful to Yossi Witztum for suggestions on improving this translation.

[1316] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 550 (no. 19361).

[1317] For this, see S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society: The Jewish Communities of the World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza. Volume III: The Community* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1971), pp. 293-298.

[1318] Al-Hāshimī continues to describe his intimate knowledge of Christianity after this, but I won't belabor the point. For the quotes, see *Risālat 'Abd Allāh b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī ilā 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Isḥāq*

been written by a Christian using a pseudonym and not by a Muslim, the interest in monasteries and in Christianity which his letter shows was not at all out of step with verisimilitude. In my previous chapter, I documented Muslim interest in churches and the things going on in them and even gave examples of Muslims living in or very close to churches. This is only the beginning of the story: contacts between Muslim ascetics and Christian monks have been well documented.[1319] And if expecting every Muslim to have an intellectualized and deep interest in Christianity of the type which al-Ḥāshimī showed, or to have been attracted to the spiritual and ascetic aspects of monasteries, is perhaps unrealistic and asking more of Muslims than one would ask of non-Muslims, it is salutary to remember that there were other attractions to be had in these Christian institutions.

Monasteries had at least two things that were of interest to Muslims and non-Muslims alike: wine and the festivals of saints. Even before the coming of Islam, Arabs would go to Christians in order to get hold of wine. A'shā, for example, was a pre-Islamic Arab poet (d. AD 629) who became a Christian through his contact with the Christian Arab tribes of al-Ḥīra in southern Iraq who were known as the 'Ibādīs: 'he would go to them and buy wine from them,' the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* reported, 'and so they taught him [Christianity].'[1320] In the 'Islamic' period, non-Muslims and especially Christians would become associated with wine. 'The one who steals wine from the People of the Book,' 'Aṭā' (d. ca. 115 AH/AD 733) is supposed to have said, 'should have

al-Kindī yad'ūhu bi-hā ilā al-Islām wa-risālat 'Abd al-Masīḥ ilā al-Hāshimī yaruddu bi-hā 'alayhi wa-yad'ūhu ilā al-Naṣrāniyya (n.p. 1880), pp. 7, 8.

[1319] See the collection of texts assembled, for example, in Y. Ṣādir, *Ruhbān 'arab fī ba'ḍ siyar al-mutaṣawwifīn al-Muslimīn* (Beirut, 2009). See also T. Andrae, *In the Garden of Myrtles: Studies in Early Islamic Mysticism*, trans. B. Sharpe (Albany, 1987), pp. 9-15.

[1320] See L. Cheikho, *Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniyya qabla al-Islām* (Beirut, 1999), p. 358 and see Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, vol. 8, (Bulaq, 1868), p. 79. For this, see G. Rothstein, *Die dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hîra: Ein versuch zur arabisch-persischen geschichte zur zeit der Sasaniden* (Halle, 1899), p. 26.

his head cut off.'[1321] 'We will not sell different kinds of wine (*khumūr*),' the Christians promised in the 'Pact of 'Umar.'[1322] But they were in fact doing just this. In a letter supposed to have been written by 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz to Ayyūb b. Shuraḥbīl and the people of Egypt which dealt with the prohibition of wine, the Caliph took up the case of people who claimed the drink *ṭilā'* was different from wine in taste and temper and that there was no harm in drinking it. 'Those [people] only imbibe their drink—which they want to claim as licit (*alladhī yastaḥillūna*)—,' he wrote, 'at the hands of the Christians, who love to have Muslims go astray in their religion and have them enter into what is not licit for them, along with that which adds to the good sale of their wares and the easing of the burden on them.'[1323] Abū Zubayd was a Christian Arab, related to the Christian tribe of Taghlib on his mother's side. Friends with al-Walīd b. 'Uqba, whom 'Umar I had appointed a fiscal official in the Jazira, Abū Zubayd eventually converted to Islam as a result of the entreaties of al-Walīd in 30 AH (AD 650). Enemies of al-Walīd would charge him with drinking alcohol with Abū Zubayd: 'Do you know that al-Walīd is drinking with Abū Zubayd?' they asked subversively: 'This man is your amir; Abū Zubayd is his chosen intimate, and they are both devotees of wine.'[1324] Though al-Ṭabarī's account of Abū Zubayd and al-Walīd does not make an explicit connection, one wonders whether Christian renegades such as Abū Zubayd fell under the suspicion of being wine drinkers; one also wonders how many of them actually did continue to

[1321] See 'Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 579 (no. 19503). On 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ, see al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 20 (Beirut, 1992), pp. 69-86. For different dates of his death, see *ibid*., pp. 84-85. Thomas asked Jacob of Edessa if it was appropriate for a Christian to knowingly drink wine from Jews; see (the damaged) Harvard Syriac 93, fols. 35b-37a.

[1322] Ibn Taymiyya, *Iqtiḍā' al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm mukhālafat aṣḥāb al-jaḥīm* (Cairo, 1950), p. 121.

[1323] See Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz*, p. 101.

[1324] Trans. R.S. Humphreys, *The Crisis of the Early Caliphate: The Reign of 'Uthmān A.D. 644-656/A.H. 24-35*, vol. 15, *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany, 1990), pp. 48-49, quotes from p. 49.

drink wine once they had converted to Islam, especially given the wide variety of attitudes towards wine in the early period which we saw in the previous chapter.

Christian feast days provided the opportunity for both wine and also for the mixing of men and women. Well before the birth of Muḥammad, the festivals of saints had become associated with revelry and impurity. In the fifth century, Theodoret would write of one holy man, Maris, who had been virtuous from his youth. 'This he told me plainly,' Theodoret wrote, 'informing me that his body had remained chaste, just as it had left his mother's womb, and this although he had taken part in many festivals of martyrs when young, and captivated the crowds with the beauty of his voice…' Though Maris had been a cantor, 'neither his bodily beauty nor his brilliance of voice nor his mixing with the multitude injured his beauty of soul…'[1325] The festivals of saints were places where men and women mixed and thus were the cause of anxiety among church leaders who feared these occasions would enable sin. 'But as for you, O women who love God,' Theodota of Amid would write in his final prayer at the very end of the seventh century,

> I command you, I, Theodota, the sinner, that when you have come to the commemoration of the saints, that you do not wear alluring adornments and radiant clothing and refined shoes on account of the thought of the world. For you will become stumbling blocks to those who look upon you, despite the fact that they fast and pray and hold vigils for their sins and for their afflictions. For looking at your fancy adornment they will be reproached and will become cut off from the help of the Saints. And, instead of them, you will receive hell with the demons. Rather than receiving help and prayers for you and for your households, you will take destruction and loss for your souls, which are the image of God.[1326]

[1325] See Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *A History of the Monks of Syria*, trans. R.M. Price, (Kalamazoo, 1985), p. 131. I am grateful to Nick Marinides for bringing this passage to my attention.

[1326] St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 563b (section 250 in my edition).

In the 'Islamic' period, Muslims would join Christians in celebrating feast days at monasteries. The most vivid testimony to this is a small genre of *kutub al-diyārāt*, books of monasteries, of which only one, that of al-Shāhbushtī (d. AH 388/AD 998), survives in any significant size.[1327] Organized into chapters, each named for a different monastery, it contains a wealth of poetry, much of it written about or inspired by monasteries, and anecdotes in which we see the elite of 'Abbasid society, including even Caliphs, going to monasteries for diversion, amusement and debauchery. Each chapter begins with a description of a different monastery, its location, and will even sometimes provide information about its feast day.[1328] 'This monastery is to the east of Baghdad,' a typical description (this one of the monastery of Samālū) begins

> at the al-Shammāsiyya gate, on the al-Mahdī Canal; there are water mills [there] and gardens, trees and palm trees surround it. It is a pleasant spot, of fine construction, inhabited by those who visit it and its monks. At Easter in Baghdad there is an amazing spectacle there, for every Christian comes and takes communion in it and every Muslim who loves pleasure and amusement heads there to stroll about. It is among Baghdad's celebrated places for excursion and known areas of revelry.[1329]

At least some members of the Muslim religious elites were none-too-happy about Muslims taking part in Christian festivals. Al-Maqrīzī (d. AH 845/AD 1442) left a lengthy description of Coptic feasts in Egypt, but he was careful to preface his account with a series of *ḥadīth* which discouraged Muslims from taking part in such activities and from learning the language of non-Muslims.[1330] Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. AH 737/AD 1336), a

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1327 On Christian monasteries in Muslim-ruled Middle East, see Ḥ. Zayyāt, 'al-Diyārāt al-naṣrāniyya fī 'l-Islām,' *al-Machriq* 36 (1938), pp. 289-417. More recently, for monasteries as sites of Christian-Muslim interaction, see E. Campbell, *A Heaven of Wine: Muslim-Christian Encounters at Monasteries in the Early Islamic Middle East* (PhD, diss., University of Washington, 2009).

1328 See al-Shāhbushtī, *al-Diyārāt* (Beirut, 1986).

1329 al-Shāhbushtī, *al-Diyārāt* (Beirut, 1986), p. 14.

1330 Robert Griveau excerpted Maqrīzī's account from the *Khiṭaṭ* and published it with an FT in 'Les Fêtes des coptes,' in R. Graffin and F. Nau, eds., *Patrologia Orientalis* vol. 10, (Paris, 1915), pp. 313-343. Statements discouraging Muslim participation occur at the beginning, on p. 316.

Mālikī jurist who devoted a section of his book *al-Madkhal* to discussing some of the feasts of the People of the Book. Among the prohibitions he makes here was that a Muslim could not sell a Christian anything—meat, vegetables, clothing—that might help him celebrate his feast, nor could he help the Christian's animal, or assist him in any way in his religion: 'for this is something which honors their polytheism and aids their unbelief.'[1331] Most interestingly perhaps, Ibn al-Ḥajj begins his discussion of these festivals by discussing just which Muslims were taking part in these events: 'There remains to talk about the festivals which most of them are accustomed to,' he wrote.

> and they know that they are festivals which are particular to the People of the Book; and so certain people of this age imitate (*fa-tashabbaha*) them in them and participate with them in venerating them [sc. the festivals]. Would that it were only among the common people! You will see, however, a certain person who claims connection to knowledge (*'ilm*) doing this in his house [i.e., celebrating a festival] and helping them in it and being pleased at it [happening] among them. He will bring choice things to those—great or small—in his house, distributing coins and clothing according to what he thinks; some of them add that they give presents to the People of the Book during their festivals and send to them what they have need of for their feast days and thereby help to increase their unbelief. Some of them send sheep and some of them send green melons and some send dates and other things which are in season. And perhaps most of them agree with that, but this, all of it, contradicts the noble divine law.[1332]

Muslim attendance and participation in Christian festivals was happening, therefore, among more than just the uneducated and religiously uninformed.

When discussing Muslim attendance of Christian feast days and interest in Christian churches, monasteries and monks, it is important to remember that many of these Muslims, if not most, were descended from Christian converts; when we encounter stories of Muslims visiting monasteries or celebrating Christian festivals, at least part of what we are dealing with is how a society handles religious change: we are

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[1331] Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, vol. 2 (Egypt, 1960), p. 49.
[1332] Ibn al-Ḥājj, *al-Madkhal*, vol. 2 (Egypt, 1960), p. 48.

looking at a sort of spiritual path dependency. One way of seeing such interest and visits is as another hybrid practice—like baptizing one's child—which resulted from conversion.[1333]

Converts and Captives

Certainly one of the most important vectors by which Late Antique ideas and practices were assimilated by the conquerors and their new religion was through converts. Earlier in this chapter I cited the story of Ḥammād b. Abī Sulaymān rebuking Farqad al-Sabakhī in the eighth century for wearing a woolen garment, something which was redolent of Christian asceticism. Ḥammād told Farqad to take off that Christianity of his. Farqad himself, we learn in another place, 'was a weaver from among the Christians of Armenia,'[1334] and one wonders whether Farqad's Christian past had anything to do with the way in which he chose to articulate his own asceticism as a Muslim. The case of Farqad raises an interesting conceptual point for historians, as well. Converts who brought familiar stories, practices and ideas with them into their new religious context are one reason why it is difficult to find the proper language to speak about Late Antique elements present in Islam: if Farqad had been a Christian who

[1333] It should also be pointed out that the arrow, so to speak, pointed both ways: already in the late seventh century, Athanasios of Balad was criticizing Christians who were mixing with pagans (*ḥanpē*) in their food and eating pagan sacrifices. The *ḥanpē* here very possibly refer to Muslims. See Syriac text and FT in F. Nau, 'Littérature canonique syriaque inédite,' *Revue de l'orient chrétien* 14 (1909), p. 128-129: ܐܬܬ ܓܝܪ ܛܒܐ ܒܝܫܐ ܠܡܫܡܥܘܬܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܡܟܝܟܬܐ. ܕܐܢܫܝܢ ܡܣܪܩܐ ܡܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ: ܓܒܪܐ ܚܣܝܪܝ ܣܒܥܐ ܥܒܕܐ ܕܟܪܣܐ ܕܒܪܘܫܐ: ܗܢܘܢ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܐܬܝܐ ܠܗ ܕܠܐ ܒܪܥܝܢ ܡܬܚܠܛܝܢ ܥܡ ܚܢܦܐ ܒܡܐܟܘܠܬܐ ܕܐܟܚܕܐ. ܘܢܫܐ ܬܘܒ ܕܘܝܬܐ ܕܐܝܟ ܕܗܘ ܡܙܕܘܓܢ ܠܚܢܦܐ ܠܐ ܢܡܘܣܐܝܬ ܘܠܐ ܘܠܝܐܝܬ: ܘܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܬ ܐܡܬܝ، ܕܐܟܠܝܢ ܕܠܐ ܦܘܠܓ ܡܢ ܕܒܚܝܗܘܢ. ܟܕ ܛܥܝܢ ܒܡܡܚܣܢܘܬܗܘܢ ܠܦܘܩܕܢܐ ܘܡܦܝܣܢܘܬܐ ܫܠܝܚܝܐ... 'For an evil report has come to our humble hearing: that idle people among the Christians—insatiable men who are slaves of the belly who, when it is of advantage, senselessly mix together with the pagans in their eating, and wretched women who, somehow are unlawfully and inappropriately wedded to the pagans. And there are times when all of them eat without hesitation from their sacrifices, being unmindful in their carelessness of the apostolic commandments and exhortations…'

[1334] See Abū 'Abd Allāh Ismā'īl b. Ibrāhīm al-Ja'fī al-Bukharī, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh al-kabīr*, vol. 7 (Beirut, 2001), p. 131 (no. 592).

was interested in asceticism and had worn a wool cloak and continued to have done so once he became a Muslim, does it make sense to say that he had ‘borrowed’ this practice from Christianity?[1335]

An *isnād* from al-Ṭabarī’s exegesis of Q 17:7 illustrates what I am speaking about very nicely. ‘Ḥamīd related to us,’ it begins

> He said: ‘Salama related to us on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq, on the authority of Abū ‘Attāb—a man from the Taghlib, he had been a Christian for a period of his life, then afterwards, he converted to Islam and then he read the Qur’ān and became versed in religion and he was, according to what was said of him, a Christian for forty years, then he lived in Islam for forty years—he said...[1336]

al-Ṭabarī continues with a story about the last prophet of Israel. What is important for us here is that this ‘Attāb had lived much of his life as a Christian Arab and then became a Muslim and from there, eventually ended up teaching material he had no doubt learned as a Christian in a Muslim context. What we have here is essentially the Christian tradition of Biblical exegesis and understanding continuing under a different label.

Tamīm b. Aws (d. AH 40/AD 660) was a Christian who converted to Islam in 9 AH (AD 630); originally from Palestine, he serves as another good example of a convert who is thought to have brought Christian ideas and practices into Islam when he became a Muslim. Tamīm’s Christian background has been pointed to to explain a number of things he has been held responsible for introducing into Islam: he was the first to light lamps in mosques; he was involved in the construction of the first *minbar*, built on Christian models; he was the one who told Muḥammad the story of the Beast

[1335] I am grateful to Lena Salaymeh for this point.

[1336] Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi‘ al-bayān ‘an ta’wīl āyy al-Qur’ān*, vol. 14 (Cairo, 2001), p. 502. For this example, see I. Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, ed. and trans. W. Behn (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 59.

(*al-jassāsa*) and the Antichrist (*al-dajjāl*) and Muḥammad himself taught these things on Tamīm's authority. Tamīm was also reputed to have been the first person to act as a *qāṣṣ*, or popular storyteller—he sought permission, the story goes, to do so from 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and was granted it[1337]—and it is the *qaṣṣāṣ* who have been credited with introducing a large amount of invented exegetical and historical material into the Islamic tradition, material they created for both edifying reasons and also for mere entertainment without regard for historical accuracy.[1338]

This brings us back to the issue of Isrā'īliyyāt, which I have spoken of previously. Here is another area where large amounts of Jewish and Christian material were taken up into the Islamic tradition. One only need read the names in the *isnād*s of al-Ṭabarī's massive Qur'ānic commentary to encounter over and over again certain figures whose teaching and acts of transmission infused Islam with stories from older Abrahamic faiths. Scholars have sifted through historical and exegetical works, in addition to biographical dictionaries, and picked out some of the most important individuals responsible for bringing this Biblical material into a Muslim context.[1339] Some of these names have already come up in the course of this chapter: Tamīm al-Dārī, whom I have just mentioned and 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ, who knew how to read Syriac. Ibn 'Abbās, perhaps the most important person in Islamic history for

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[1337] For all this information about Tamīm, see M. Lecker's article 'Tamīm al-Dārī' in *EI*[2] see also see G. Levi Della Vida's article, 'Tamīm al-Dārī,' in *EI*[1]. His conversion is also reported as having taken place in 7 AH (AD 628). For this information on Tamīm, see, too, Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Ḥajar al-'Asqalanī, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 1 (Cairo, 1993), pp. 304-305 and 'Izz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba fī ma'rifat al-ṣaḥāba*, vol. 1 (Beirut, n.d), pp. 428-429.

[1338] See P. Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton, 1987), pp. 215-230; I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern , vol. 2 (London, 1971), pp. 150-159. See also Ch. Pellat's article, 'Ḳāṣṣ' in *EI*[2].

[1339] I am thinking particularly of R. Na'nā'a, *al-Isrā'īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Damascus/Beirut, 1970), pp. 132-197. Mention might also be made of M.W. 'Allām, *al-Isrā'īlīyāt fī 'l-tafsīr al-Qur'ānī* (Beirut, 2007), pp. 65-74.

Qur'ānic exegesis, was also credited with transmitting much Jewish and Christian material. Such was his erudition, he was called 'the rabbi of the Arabs' (*ḥibr al-ʻarab*).[1340] Ibn ʻAbbās and ʻAbd Allāh b. ʻAmr b. al-ʻĀṣ serve as reminders that not all the prominent transmitters of Jewish and Christian lore were converts or descended from converts from these two religions, but certainly some significant transmitters were. Mention might also be made of a few more individuals. We have previously met in this chapter Kaʻb al-Aḥbār, a Jewish convert who transmitted large amounts of Jewish material into the Islamic tradition. Alongside him should be set ʻAbd Allāh b. Salām (d. AH 43/AD 663-664), a Jew whose original name was al-Ḥusayn and who converted to Islam when Muḥammad made his flight to Medina, who is another such figure responsible for injecting large amounts of Jewish material into the Islamic tradition.[1341] Wahb b. Munnabih (d. AH 110/AD 728 or AH 114/AD 732) was not a Jewish convert, but was nevertheless an important vector through which Biblical traditions from Kaʻb and ʻAbd Allāh were passed down.[1342] Ibn Jurayj (d. 150 AH/AD 767), the son of a Greek slave named 'Jurayj' ('George') and reputed to be the first person to compose books in the Ḥijāz, was another prominent transmitter of Isrā'īliyyāt with a direct Jewish or Christian connection.[1343]

[1340] Trans. W.M. Brinner from W.M. Brinner, trans., *The Children of Israel*, vol. 3, *The History of al-Ṭabarī* (Albany, 1991), p. 46. Arabic text in Abū Jaʻfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, vol. 1, (Leiden, 1879-1881), p. 461.

[1341] See M.W. ʻAllām, *al-Isrā'īlīyāt fī 'l-tafsīr al-Qur'ānī* (Beirut, 2007), pp. 71-73 and R. Naʻnāʻa, *al-Isrā'īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr* (Damascus/Beirut, 1970), pp. 159-160. On ʻAbd Allāh, see Ibn al-Athīr, *Usd al-ghāba*, vol. 3, (Beirut, 1996), pp. 265-266 and J. Horovitz's article ''Abd Allāh b. Salām' in *EI*[2].

[1342] See R.G. Khoury's article, 'Wahb b. Munabbih , Abū ʿAbd Allāh,' in *EI*[2] and Naʻnāʻa, *al-Isrā'īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr*, pp. 183-192.

[1343] On Ibn Jurayj al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmā' al-rijāl*, vol. 18, pp. 338-354; (his father Jurayj slave and his Rūmī origin, p. 339; as *awwal man ṣannafa al-kutub*—along with Ibn Abī ʻArūba—p. 341). Also on Ibn Jurayj, see Ch. Pellat's article 'Ibn Djuraydj, Abu 'l- Walīd / Abū Khālid ʻAbd al- Malik b. ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz b. Djuraydj al- Rūmī al- Ḳurashī al- makkī (80–150/699–767)' in *EI*[2]. For all this and for Ibn Jurayj as prominent transmitter of Isrā'īliyyat, see Naʻnāʻa, *al-Isrā'īlīyāt wa-atharuhā fī kutub al-tafsīr*, pp. 193-195.

We have the names of other converts who introduced ideas and practices into Islam as well. The Qadarite controversy—the dispute over human freedom and divine predestination—was one of the earliest theological issues to arise in Islam. And the first person to speak about *qadar* was supposed to have been a Christian from Iraq named SUSR or Sawsan who converted to Islam and then re-converted to Christianity. Maʿbad al-Juhanī, a famous early Qadarite, is said to have learned from Sawsan, and Ghaylan al-Dimashqī, another famous Qadarite, is said to have learned from Maʿbad. Ghaylan himself was a Coptic convert to Islam.[1344] Scholars have noted similarities between arguments adduced in favor of free-will by Qadarites and Christian theologians; they have also noted apparent Syriac calques in Qadarī vocabulary and other indications of Christian elements in Qadarism and Islamic theology more broadly.[1345]

If we are interested in the questions of conversion and of how non-Muslim ideas were assimilated into and affected the development of Islam, we cannot ignore the

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[1344] For this report, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, vol. 48, (Beirut, 1997), p. 192. See also Ch. Pellat's article 'Ghaylān b. Muslim, Abū Marwān al-Dimashḳī al-Ḳibṭī,' and J. van Ess's article 'Maʿbad b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUkaym al-Djuhanī,' in EI[2]. For Ghaylan and Maʿbad, see R. Caspar, *A Historical Introduction to Islamic Theology: Muḥammad and the Classical Period*, trans. P. Johnstone (Rome, 1998), p. 158, n. 32. For Maʿbad as the first person to speak about *qadar* and then Ghaylān after him, see Ibn Qutayba, *al-Maʿārif* (Cairo, 1960), p. 484. For a discussion of other accounts from the Islamic tradition concerning the question of the origins of Qadarism, see J. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. Und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, vol. 1 (Berlin/New York, 1991), pp. 72-73. NB: van Ess (p. 74) notes that while Awzāʿī made a connection between Ghaylan's Christian background (which paralleled that of Maʿbad) and his fall into heresy, in later reports about Ghaylan, no connection was made between Ghaylan's Christianity and heresy. According to van Ess, Arab aristocrats were suspicious of Ghaylan's anti-determinist teaching not because of any apparent connection to Christianity but rather because of the threat it posed to the social order. Against the idea that ascribing a heresy to some sort of Christian origin is a standard topos in Islamic heresiography, similar to the Christian practice, perhaps, of ascribing heresies to Jewish origins and Judaism, one might point out that in the index to Hellmut Ritter's edition of al-Ashʿarī's *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn* (Wiesbaden, 1980), a classic and important work of Islamic heresiography, the word 'Christians' (*al-naṣārā*) only occurs three times and 'Jacobites' (*al-yaʿqūbiyya*), occurs only once. The word 'Nestorian' does not occur and 'Jews' (*al-yahūd*) occurs twice. This all in a text which runs to some 611 pages.

[1345] See J. van Ess's article, 'Ḳadariyya' in *EI*[2]; see also M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-critical study* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 146-152 and A.S. Tritton, 'Foreign Influences on Muslim Theology,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 10 (1942), pp. 837-842. Caspar, *A Historical Introduction to Islamic* Theology, pp. 158-161 lists Christian elements in Islamic theology, but seeks to de-emphasize any Christian 'influence' on the earliest theological debates in Islam.

issue of captives and the movement of peoples throughout the eastern Mediterranean that resulted from constant raiding and warfare—the early medieval period was a time of a constant influx of population into and out of Muslim-controlled areas in the form of prisoners of war. Among the unflattering characterizations of the ruling Muslims that John of Phenek would use at the end of the seventh century was that they were a people 'whose wish it is to take captives and deport.' Taking foreign captives and slaves was a yearly ritual:

> Their robber bands went annually to distant parts and to the islands, bringing back captives from all the peoples under the heavens. Of each person they required a tribute, allowing him to remain in whatever faith he wished. Among them were also Christians in no small numbers: some belonged to the heretics, while others to us.[1346]

A brief glance through some historical chronicles bears out John's observation.[1347] In 640, for example, we find the Arabs plundering and taking captives in Cilicia, a campaign which culminated with the sack of the town of Euchaita and with taking its entire population, men, women and children, captive.[1348] In 649-650, the Arabs brought 5,000 slaves with them back from an invasion of Isauria.[1349] In 661-662 there was another raid against the Byzantines which resulted in many captives.[1350] In 662-663, the

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[1346] Trans. S.P. Brock, in *idem*., 'North Mesopotamia in the Late Seventh Century: Book XV of John bar Penkāyē's *Rīš Mellē*, first quote, p. 60, second quote, p. 61. For the Syriac text, see Mingana, *Sources Syriaques*, p. *145: ܘܗܘܝܐ ܗܘܐ ܨܒܝܢܗܘܢ ܫܒܝܬܐ ܘ ܠܓܠܘܬܐ and p. *147: ܓܝܣܘܬܗܘܢ ܕܝܢ ܟܠ ܫܢܐ ܠܐܬܪܘ̈ܬܐ ܪ̈ܚܝܩܬܐ: ܘܠܓܙܪ̈ܬܐ ܐܙܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܘܫܒܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܘܡܝܬܝܢ (ܗܘܘ) ܡܢ ܟܠ ܥܡ̈ܡܐ ܕܬܚܝܬ ܫܡܝܐ: ܘܡܢ ܟܠ ܐܢܫ ܡܕܐܬܐ ܒܠܚܘܕ ܬܒܥܝܢ ܗܘܘ: ܘܒܕܐܝܢܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ ܕܨܒܐ ܗܘܐ ܩܐܡ ܠܗ ܫܒܩܝܢ ܗܘܘ. ܒܗܘܢ ܐܦ ܐܝܬ ܗܘܘ ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܠܐ ܙܥܘܪ. ܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܢ ܗ̈ܪܛܝܩܐ ܘܡܢܗܘܢ ܡܢܢ.

[1347] For the most part, I will base myself on events recorded in the 'Syriac Common Source,' i.e., the now-lost *Chronicle* of Theophilos of Edessa, as reconstructed by Robert Hoyland in *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (pp. 631-671) on the basis of material common to Theophanes, Dionysios of Tellmaḥre (via Michael the Syrian and the *Chronicle to the year 1234*), and Agapios of Manbij.

[1348] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 4, p. 423 (Syriac) = vol. 2, p. 431 (FT). See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 640.

[1349] See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History, AD 284-813*, (Oxford, 1997), p. 479.

[1350] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 486.

Arabs took part of Sicily: 'The captives were settled at Damascus of their own free will.'[1351] In 663-664, Sklavinians joined the Arabs in raiding against the Byzantines and afterwards, 5,000 of them settled near Apamea.[1352] In AD 666-667 an Arab army which reached as far as Chalcedon took many captives.[1353] In AD 668-669, the Arabs captured some 80,000 prisoners in Africa.[1354] In AD 670-671 Arab raids on the Byzantines resulted in still more captives.[1355] In AD 685-686, the Arabs and the Byzantines made an agreement by which 12,000 Mardaites from Arab-controlled territory would be sent to Byzantine-ruled areas.[1356] In 693-694, an Arab expedition in Byzantine territory took many prisoners and in 694/695, an expedition in Armenia resulted in a large number of captives as well.[1357] An expedition in 696-697 against Byzantine territory saw many captives being taken again.[1358] In 708-709, the Arabs captured Tyana and took many of its inhabitants as slaves.[1359] The next year, 709-710, the Arabs raided Byzantine territory and took more captives.[1360] In 711-712, Philippikos seems to have transferred the Empire's population of Armenians into Arab territory; the Arabs, for their part, captured Amasya and took many captives.[1361]

And so it goes. These notices can be multiplied: Arabs took many Byzantine captives in 712-713,[1362] 713-714,[1363] 721-722,[1364] 731-732,[1365] 736-737,[1366] 738-739,[1367] 740-

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[1351] Trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, in *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 487. NB: The translators disagree with Theophanes' dating of these events (p. 487, n.1).

[1352] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 487.

[1353] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 490.

[1354] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 491.

[1355] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 492.

[1356] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 506.

[1357] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 513, 514.

[1358] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 516.

[1359] See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, pp. 525-526.

[1360] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 526.

[1361] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 532. See n. 2 on understanding Philippikos' action vis-à-vis the Armenians.

[1362] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 533.

741,[1368] 741-742.[1369] The Byzantines themselves were taking captives as well. In 699-700, the Byzantines invaded Syria and took many Arab captives.[1370] In this instance, they apparently wanted the Arab captives, but when they captured parts of northern Syria in 744-745, the Byzantines sent the Muslim inhabitants away and moved the Christians—Miaphysites—to Thrace.[1371] Around 750-751, the Byzantines took as captive the inhabitants of Claudia and all of Armenia IV.[1372] And it should be pointed out that I have only here made mention of raids and captives taken based on Christian sources: if we look at Arabic materials, there is evidence for Muslim raids into Byzantine territory taking place literally every year, just as John of Phenek claimed.[1373] The movement of population must have been constant. This was not always due to wars and military raiding, either: in 686-687, Syria witnessed a famine which had the result that 'many men migrated to the Roman country.'[1374] In 690-691, Justinian tried to move the population of Cyprus to Byzantine territory, but many of them drowned in transit; those who did not drown returned to Cyprus.[1375]

[1363] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 534.

[1364] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 490 (FT) = vol. 4, p. 457. Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 655, gives the date as 721-722, but see also Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 490, n. 4.

[1365] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 568.

[1366] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 570.

[1367] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 571.

[1368] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 576.

[1369] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 577.

[1370] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 518.

[1371] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 584.

[1372] See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 518 (FT) = vol. 4, p. 472 (Syriac). See also C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 590. For this date, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 669.

[1373] See the material collected in E.W. Brooks, 'The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750), From Arabic Sources,' *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 18 (1898), pp. 182-208.

[1374] Trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 507.

[1375] C. Mango and R. Scott, trans. *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 509. On the transfer of people into and out of the Byzantine Empire in the early medieval periods, see C. Mango, *Byzantium: The Empire of New Rome* (New York, 1980), pp. 25-26.

Such movement of people was not lacking in social ramifications. This was a society in which the issue of captives was of concern to many people, across religious lines. ʻUmar II, for example, wrote a letter to Muslim captives in Constantinople sending them money and someone to ransom them.[1376] Concern for captives of course operated at more than just the elite level. Theodota of Amid's *Life*, written in the early eighth century, picks out his compassion for captives and efforts to ransom them as one of the many signs of his holiness. 'He would speak to each person in accordance with their stature,' we are told,

> and wore pain over those taken into captivity. He would stand in the pulpit of the church and speak on account of them. He would speak in the following way: 'My brothers, today, Our Lord asks of you through my hands. Give me, each one of you, ten *fal*s; I have confidence in the Lord that He will reward you with His blessings instead of me.' And Our Lord was giving zeal to their hearts and they were fulfilling His commandment, Christians along with Muslims. He was saving captives and sending them away. And they would go, blessing and rejoicing and praying for Amid and for Theodota her Bishop.[1377]

These grass-roots efforts, so to speak, at ransoming points to a simple fact: captives were located everywhere and came from all segments of society: in AD 739-740, the Caliph Hishām 'put to death the Christian prisoners in all the towns of his realm.'[1378] When the Mardaites revolted in 676-677, their mountain strongholds across the western Levant became a magnet for people looking for sanctuary: 'Many slaves,

[1376] See Ibn ʻAbd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ʻUmar b. ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz*, pp. 163-164.

[1377] For the Syriac text, see Mardin 275/8, pp. 554-555: ܠܟܠܢܫ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܡܫܘܚܬܗ ܡܡܠܠ ܗܘܐ. ܥܠ ܫܒ̈ܝܐ ܕܝܢ ܚܫܐ ܠܒܫ ܗܘܐ: ܘܥܠ ܒܐܡ ܕܥܕܬܐ ܩܐܡ ܗܘܐ ܕܢܡܠܠ ܡܛܠܬܗܘܢ ܘܗܟܢܐ ܐܡܪ ܗܘܐ. ܐܚܝ. ܡܪܢ ܒܥܐ ܝܘܡܢܐ ܡܢܟܘܢ ܒܐܝܕ̈ܝ. ܗܒܘ ܠܝ ܟܠ ܚܕ ܚܕ ܡܢܟܘܢ ܥܣܪܐ ܦܠܣܐ. ܬܟܝܠ ܐܢܐ ܥܠ ܡܪܝܐ. ܕܦܪܥ ܠܟܘܢ ܚܠܦܝ ܒܒܘܪܟܬܗ.. ܘܡܪܢ ܝܗܒ ܗܘܐ ܠܠܒܘܬܗܘܢ ܚܦܝܛܘܬܐ. ܘܡܫܡܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܦܘܩܕܢܗ، ܟܪ̈ܣܛܝܢܐ ܥܡ ܚܢ̈ܦܐ. ܘܦܪܩ ܗܘܐ ܫܒ̈ܝܐ ܘܡܫܕܪ ܠܗܘܢ. ܘܐܙܠܝܢ ܗܘܘ ܟܕ ܡܒܪܟܝܢ ܟܕ ܚܕܝܢ. ܟܕ ܡܨܠܝܢ ܥܠ ܐܡܝܕ. ܘܥܠ ܡܪܝ، ܬܐܘܕܘܛܐ ܐܦܣܩܘܦܗ̇.. For the Karshūnī, see St Mark's Jerusalem 199, fol. 557b (sections 146 and 147 in my edition).

[1378] Trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, in *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 573. Michael the Syrian placed this event in AD 731 (AG 1042) and suggested that Hishām was engaged in a mistaken act of tit-for-tat—he had falsely believed that the Byzantine Emperor Leo had had all of his Arab captives executed: See Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 501 (FT) = vol. 4, p. 463 (date on p. 462).

captives and natives took refuge with them,' Theophanes tells us, 'so that in a short time they grew to many thousands.'[1379] In 653-654, two Christian brothers in Tripoli in Lebanon 'rushed to the city prison, where there was a multitude of Roman captives.' They broke into the prison, freed the captives, and together killed the Muslim ruler of the city.[1380]

The presence of captives in society raised questions that theological leaders had to deal with. Since we see certain female captives transgressing, a concerned question directed at Anastasios of the Sinai asked, what should we say about them? Those who transgress from pleasure and wantonness, he replied, fall under a greater judgment than those who sin out of difficulty and necessity, just as the one who steals food from hunger has a smaller sin than the one who does not need and still steals. Women who are beautifully adorned have a different allowance than those women in their midst who are wearing chains.[1381]

I am interested in information flows[1382] here, however, and the movement of people unsurprisingly had effects in this area as well. If we look, we can find trace examples of information being disseminated by these people, but given the numbers of captives who were moving and the constancy of their movement, we should assume that such traces as we have are only faint echoes of what must have been a much larger

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[1379] Trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, in *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 496.

[1380] Trans. C. Mango and R. Scott, in *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 482.

[1381] See M. Richard and J.A Munitiz, edd., *Anastasii Sinaitae: Questiones et Responsiones* (Turnhout, 2006) pp. 127-128: ΟϚʹ ΕΡΩΤΗΣΙΣ Ἐπειδὴ ὁρῶμέν τινας καὶ ἐν αἰχμαλωσίᾳ ὑπαρχούσας δούλας παρεξερχομένας, τί χρὴ περὶ αὐτῶν λέγειν; ΑΠΟΚΡΙΣΙΣ Αἱ μὲν καθ' ἡδονὴν καὶ στρῆνος παρεξερχόμεναι μείζονι κρίματι ὑποπίπτουσιν, αἱ δὲ ἀπὸ στενώσεως καὶ ἀνάγκης, ἐλάττονι, ὅπερ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν κλεπτῶν, ὅτι κουφοτέραν ἁμαρτίαν ἔχει ὁ ἀπὸ πείνης κλέπτων τροφὰς ὑπὲρ τὸν μὴ δεόμενον καὶ συλοῦντα. Ἐφ' ἑκάστης δὲ ἁμαρτίας ἐστὶ κατανοῆσαι πολλὰς διαφοράς· καὶ γὰρ ἄλλην συγγνώμην εἶχον αἱ καλλωπιζόμεναι καὶ κοσμούμεναι γυναῖκες ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ χώρᾳ ὑπὲρ τὰς νῦν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς αἰχμαλωσίας τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν σιδηροφορουσῶν, αὗται ἐνώπιον αὐτῶν χρυσοφοροῦσαι καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνόμεναι....

[1382] I owe this language to John-Paul Ghobrial.

phenomenon. When people moved, they took their ideas, customs, habits and culture with them and they added those things to the flux of the societies they were now entering into. And this was a world where Arabic, the language of the conquerors, was still trying to find its way: according to Fück, by the early ʻAbbasid period indigenous languages—Latin in Iberia, Berber in N. Africa, Coptic in Egypt, Aramaic in Mesopotamia—still dominated the countryside; in the cities of Iraq, they kept speaking Persian among the lower classes. People were even speaking Persian in the garrison cities. If anything, the situation was becoming more multi-lingual as time went on: by the reign al-Mahdī and Hārun al-Rashīd, Arab elites in Basra were speaking both Arabic and Persian.[1383]

From time to time, we catch glimpses of linguistic intermediaries who served as the bridges between Arabic speakers and non-Arabic speakers,[1384] but we should also

[1383] Following closely J. Fück, *ʻArabīya: recherches sur l'histoire de la langue et du style arabe*, trans. C. Denieau, (Paris, 1955), pp. 70-72.

[1384] In the unpublished dispute between a monk from Beth Ḥalē and an Arab Muslim, the record of the debate goes on for nearly eight folia in Syriac. A passing mention at the beginning of the text, however, informs us that the Arab 'was speaking to us through a translator.' (Diyarbakr Syriac 95, fol. 1a: ܒܡܬܪܓܡܢܐ ܡܡܠܠ ܗܘܐ ܥܡܢ) This translator is anonymous, but Arab Muslim rule and interaction with locals must have been built on many like him who could move back and forth across linguistic and cultural frontiers. More than mere interaction with locals, however, was enabled by multilingual intermediaries. The narrator of this dispute observes that the Muslim was 'greatly learned in our scriptures and in their Qur'ān.' Diyarbakr Syriac 95, fol. 1a: ܘܣܓܝ ܡܗܝܪ ܗܘܐ ܒܟܬ̈ܒܐ ܕܝܠܢ ܘܒܩܘܪܐܢ ܕܝܠܗܘܢ The Muslim's knowledge of Christianity must have come from somewhere. For more on this text, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 465-472, who concludes that it is a fictional piece which dates at the earliest to the late Umayyad period. I owe my copy of this manuscript to the generosity of Michael Cook and Krisztina Szilagyi. For Christian Arab tribes, bilingual in Arabic and Syriac, being asked to translate the Gospel into Arabic, see Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 422 (Syriac); vol. 4, p. 432 (French). For an example of Greek-Arabic bilingualism, see the religious discussion held between the Byzantine Jurja and Abū ʻUbayda in Muḥammad b. ʻAbd Allāh al-Azdī, *Ta'rīkh futūh al-Shām* (Cairo, 1970), pp. 196-197. The account mentions a translator (*tarjamān*) (p. 197) who renders Abū ʻUbayda's words into '*Rūmiyya*.' See also Anastasios of the Sinai's account (in Greek) of a Christian in Babylon in Egypt who was in charge of the prison there and who, in the story, mentions a prisoner speaking to him in the 'Egyptian language' (λέγει μοι αἰγυπτιακῇ γλώττῃ): See Nau, 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte),' p. 68. Nau (note, p. 68) suggests that this incident seems to have happened before the Arab invasion, since the Arabs would not have commissioned a Christian to be in charge of prisoners; this, however, is not obviously the case: see, e.g., the comments in Bell and Crum, *Greek Papyri in the British Museum*, vol. 4, p. xxxvii, 'Nearly all the pagarchs and probably all the subordinate local officials were Christians, and so,

assume that captives would eventually learn the language of their Arabic-speaking captors, or enough of it to get along, and this was all that was needed to open up a vector for cultural exchange. Of course, captives were spreading ideas well before the arrival of Muslims in the Middle East. The people of Iberia, Jacob of Edessa's *Chronology* informs us, were 'attracted to Christianity by means of a certain Christian woman, who had gone to that country as a captive.'[1385] This process would continue into the life of the Prophet. Muḥammad was known to sit and talk to a young Christian slave named Jabr, Ibn Isḥāq wrote, 'and they used to say "The one who teaches Muhammad most of what he brings is Jabr the Christian, slave of the B. al-Ḥaḍramī."'[1386] Jabr and Yasār, another of the various 'informants' of Muḥammad identified by the Islamic tradition, were thought in at least some quarters to have been captured at the hands of the Byzantines and turned into slaves.[1387] Such stories may have their origin in the fact that the Qur'ān itself alludes to a foreigner who was friends with Muḥammad and who was charged with feeding him the contents of his revelation: 'We know very well that

too, were the administrators of the naval centres of Alexandria, Rosetta and Damietta.' If the incident did take place after the Arab invasion (Anastasios writes at the end of the seventh century and does not give the man's name because, he states, he is still alive), we have an example here of an individual official who may have been trilingual—knowing Greek, Egyptian/Coptic, and Arabic. It was nameless, multilingual figures like this one who made Arab rule over non-Arab populations possible.

[1385] Trans. E.W. Brooks, in *idem*., 'The Chronological Canon of James of Edessa,' *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 53 (1899), pp. 309-310.

[1386] Trans. A. Guillaume, in *idem*., trans., *The Life of Muhammad*, p. 180. Note that Jabr comes from the Aramaic '*gabrā*,' meaning simply 'man.' This was first pointed out to me by Aron Zysow.

[1387] See C. Gilliot, 'Les «informateurs» juifs et chrétiens de Muḥammad,' p. 110. Of course, both of these figures could have been fabrications invented to exegete Q 16:103. Even if these two never existed, the fact that it might be suggested that they had been captives suggests something about associations which must have existed, at least in some portions of the Middle Ages, about the information-carrying functions captives might play.

they say, "Only a mortal is teaching him,"' it acknowledges, 'The speech at him whom they hint is foreign (*a'jamī*) and this is clear Arabic speech.'[1388]

Learning from foreign captives was a common experience. 'This we heard from men who had been taken as captives to Khuzastan, [from] Tachkastan,' the Armenian historian Sebeos (or perhaps his source) writes at one point, 'Having been themselves eyewitnesses of these events, they gave this account to us.'[1389] For students of the Monothelete controversy of the seventh century, captives also play an important role. If we are to believe Michael the Syrian, the Monothelete understanding of the number of Christ's wills was the dominant one in Syria until an influx of captives from the Byzantine Empire changed things:

> Now, while this doctrine [sc. Dyotheletism] had held sway in the regions of the Romans from the time of Constantine [IV], in the regions of Syria it was not accepted at all. At this time, however, it was planted by means of the captives and exiles who came and settled in Syria because of Arab raids. Increasingly, city dwellers and their bishops and their leaders were corrupted and accepted this doctrine on account of esteem for the Roman Empire.[1390]

In the Arabic *Life* of John Damascene, John was educated by Cosmas, a Calabrian 'philosopher monk' who was brought to Damascus with a group of captives taken in a raid on a boat at sea.[1391] Hārūn al-Rashīd had a Byzantine slave girl who taught a young

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[1388] Q 16:103. Translation Arberry, with some alteration. Al-Ṭabarī understood the person being referred to here by the Qur'ān to be a Byzantine slave (*'abd rūmī*). See, al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āyy al-qur'ān*, vol. 14 (Cairo, 2001), p. 364.

[1389] Translated R.W. Thomson in *The Armenian History attributed to Sebeos. Part I: Translation and Notes,*, vol. 1 (Liverpool, 1999), p. 102. N. 634, Thomson suggests that these lines from Sebeos' source. J.-H. Johnson and T. Greenwood, *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos. Part II: Historical Commentary* (Liverpool, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 248-249, suggest the same. For this, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 125, 593.

[1390] Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, vol. 2, p. 492 (FT) = vol. 4, pp. 457-458 (Syriac): ܟܕ ܓܝܪ ܒܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܕܪ̈ܘܡܝܐ. ܐܚܝܕܐ ܗ̄ܘܬ ܗ̇ܝ ܗܕܐ ܬܪܥܝܬܐ. ܡܢ ܙܒܢܐ ܕܩܘܣܛܢܛܝܢܘܣ ܐܠܐ ܒܐܬܪ̈ܘܬܐ ܕܣܘܪܝܐ ܠܐ ܗܘܬ ܡܬܩܒܠܐ ܗ̄ܘܬ ܗܫܐ ܕܝܢ ܐܝܟ ܕܙܪܝܥܬ ܒܝܕ ܫܒ̈ܝܐ ܘ ܓ̈ܠܘܝܐ. ܕܒܓ̈ܝܣܐ ܕܛܝ̈ܝܐ ܢܦܩܘ ܘܐܬܬܬܒܘ ܒܣܘܪܝܐ. ܘܡܬܝܪܐܝܬ ܐܬܚܒܠܘ ܒܢ̈ܝ ܡܕܝܢܬܐ ܗܘܐ ܘܡܠܟܘܗ̇. ܡܛܠ ܐܘܦܘܠܛܝܣ ܒܐܝܩܪ ܕܡܠܟܘܬܐ ܕܪ̈ܘܡܝܐ.

[1391] C. Bacha, ed., *Sīrat al-qiddīs Yuḥannā al-Dimashqī* (Harissa, 1912), p. 12. For Cosmas as an example of information flowing through captives, see J. Herrin, 'Aspects of the Process of Hellenization in the early Middle Ages,' *Annual of the British School at Athens* 68 (1973), p. 118. As with most of the

slave boy she was related to and who was born in Baghdad Greek literature, how to read Greek books, and how to speak Greek;[1392] al-Rashīd put Yūḥannā b. Māsawayh in charge of translating ancient books which were found in Ankara, Amorium and other Byzantine cities when Muslims took captives from them.[1393] Theophanes credits an architect from Heliopolis in Syria who was a refugee in the Byzantine Empire with the invention of the famous naval weapon of Greek Fire.[1394] In 693-694, refugee Slavs from the Byzantine Empire used their knowledge of their former home to help a Muslim army successfully raid there.[1395] A prisoner captured in Asia Minor claimed to be the son of the emperor Justinian; the Arabs outfitted him with regal trappings and had him tour about Syria in order to scare the Byzantines with the threat of a pretender to their throne.[1396]

There was also the movement of individuals who were not captives: al-Ḥārith b. Kalada (d. AH 13/AD 634-635), the famous Arab doctor who counted Muḥammad among his patients, was said to have studied medicine in Persia and in Yemen.[1397] Ananias of Shirak (d. ca. 650), could not find the instruction he wanted in Armenia and so traveled to Greece, Constantinople, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Rome and Athens.[1398] Maximos the Confessor spread his teaching while travelling from Palestine to North Africa (where he

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sources I use in this chapter, and indeed, throughout the dissertation, whether the events described in them actually took place and whether they were actually written at the time they purport to be composed, is irrelevant. Even as fictional narratives, they still reflect expectations and possibilities which indicate what was considered possible and plausible in the early medieval and medieval periods.

[1392] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʻa, *ʻUyūn al-anbāʼ*, p. 258.

[1393] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʻa, *ʻUyūn al-anbāʼ*, p. 246.

[1394] See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 494, but see also n. 5 which calls into question crediting Kallinikos with this invention.

[1395] See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 513.

[1396] See C. Mango and R. Scott, trans., *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*, p. 570.

[1397] See Ṣāʼid b. Aḥmad al-Andalusī, *Kitāb ṭabaqāt al-umam* (Beirut, 1912), p. 47. Pellat was skeptical about the claim that al-Ḥārith had studied in Yemen, see his article ʻal-Ḥārith b. Kalada b. ʻAmr b. Iladj al-Thaḳafī (d. 13/634-5), in *EI*[2].

[1398] See F.C. Conybeare, trans., ʻAnanias of Shirak (A.D. 600-650c.)ʼ, *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 6 (1897), pp. 572-574.

found 87 Nestorian students from Nisibis who eventually moved to Rome) to Sicily to Rome to Constantinople and eventually being exiled to Lazika.[1399] Jacob of Edessa went to Alexandria from northern Mesopotamia in order to 'gather wisdom.'[1400] Archbishop Theodore (d. 690 AD) moved from Tarsus to Rome to Canterbury, with stops in Constantinople and (it is presumed) Antioch and Edessa along the way; the wide learning he brought with him to England has been credited with helping to create in Canterbury one of the most exciting centers of education in the early medieval period.[1401] Already in the middle Ages, it was recognized that travelling for trade was one way that the pre-Islamic Arabs learned about other peoples[1402] and travelling for trade did not stop once the Arabs had conquered the Middle East. The Christian scholar and translator Abū 'Alī b. Zur'a (d. AH 398/AD 1008), for instance, was known to travel to Byzantium as a merchant.[1403]

But here my focus is captives. And captives can help us understand not only the movement of information in this early medieval world, they can help us understand religious change as well, for captives, removed from their homes, families and communities and enslaved might be prime candidates for conversion to a different religion. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz wrote about a Muslim who was captured and then converted to Christianity: if this became known, his wife would be free of him and should undertake a waiting period of three menstrual cycles; his money was to be given

[1399] See S.P. Brock, 'An Early Syriac Life of Maximus the Confessor,' *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), pp. 314-319.

[1400] Michael the Syrian, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche Jacobite d'Antioche*, 1166-1199, (Paris, 1899-1910), IV 445 = II 471 (FT)).

[1401] See M. Lapidge, 'The career of Archbishop Theodore,' pp. 1-29 in *idem*., ed., *Archbishop Theodore: Commemorative Studies on His Life and Influence* (Cambridge, 1995).

[1402] See Ṣā'id b. Aḥmad al-Andalusī (d. AH 462/AD 1069), *Kitāb ṭabqāt al-umam* (Beirut, 1912.), p. 44.

[1403] See Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *'Uyūn al-anbā'*, p. 319. See also the article on him 'Ibn Zur'a, Abū 'Alī 'Īsā b. Isḥāḳ b. Zur'a,' in *EI*^{2}.

to his Muslim heirs.[1404] ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Rabīʿa, the father of al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Allāh, captured al-Ḥārith's mother, we are told, along with six hundred other Ethiopians. Once captured, she made three different requests of ʿAbd Allāh, all of which he granted; her second request was that he not force her to change her religion.[1405]

Indeed, those who resisted conversion were heroes. One story tells of a messenger from Caliph ʿUmar II who came upon a Muslim captive in Byzantine territory who was blind: given the choice between having his eyes gouged out and converting to Christianity, he told the Caliph's messenger, 'I chose my religion over my sight.' When the messenger returned to ʿUmar and told him of the story, the Caliph was weeping before he even finished; he wrote to the Byzantine Emperor demanding the blinded Muslim be sent to him and promising he would not return any captured troops if the man was not released.[1406] Anastasios of the Sinai wrote of a 17 year-old Jew on Cyprus 'from the east' who had been preserved through captivity and now sincerely wanted to receive baptism and become a Christian.[1407] A theme, however, which characterizes Anastasios' *Stories Useful for the Soul* from the late seventh century is the difficult challenges faced by Christian captives under Muslim rule.[1408]

What became of all these captives who were being moved around the eastern Mediterranean? The pattern they followed seems to have been: captivity, enslavement, conversion, manumission.[1409] And in the early period, it has been asserted, most

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[1404] ʿAbd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 9 (Beirut, 2000), p. 561 (no. 19412).

[1405] al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-kamāl fī asmāʾ al-rijāl*, vol. 5 (Beirut, 1985), p. 241.

[1406] For the story, see Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Sīrat ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz*, pp. 168-169.

[1407] See Nau, 'Le texte grec des récits utiles à l'âme d'Anastase (le Sinaïte),' p. 71. Τούτῳ τῷ πανοσίῳ μου πατέρι, προσῆλθέ τις παῖς Ἑβραῖος ἐξ ἀνατολῆς δισωθεὶς ἀπὸ αἰχμαλωσὶας, ἑπτακαιδεκαέτης ὑπάρχων, καὶ εἰλικρινῶς παρακαλῶν ἀξιωξῆναι τοῦ ἁγίου βαπτίσματος καὶ χριστιανὸς γενέσθαι

[1408] For this, see Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 100.

[1409] See P. Crone, 'The Early Islamic World,' p. 314.

converts to Islam were freedmen.[1410] Once manumitted, a former slave would be the *mawlā*, or client, of the one who had freed him. And though some might complain that the children of prisoners of war were the causes of heresies in Islam,[1411] the reality is that, as Goldziher pointed out long ago, many of the most important figures in Islamic history had as their forebears Persian captives.[1412] Indeed, a study of the position and importance of *mawālī* in Islamic society and in the development of Islam itself is well beyond the scope of this work, but the importance of *mawālī*—both those who became clients of Muslims through conversion and those who became clients through manumission—can hardly be overemphasized. As an example, one can point an anecdote told by Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. AH 124/AD 742) in which the Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik asked him about who was in charge of Mecca, Yemen, Egypt, Syria, the Jazīra, Khurasan, Basra, and was exasperated to find that of all of these, only Basra had an Arab as its leader and the rest were run by *mawālī*.[1413] Having been conquered by the Arabs, it was these *mawālī* who eventually came to dominate the new society which resulted from the Arab conquests.[1414] *Graecia capta ferum victorem cepit*.

1410 See P. Crone, *Roman, Provincial and Islamic law: The Origins of the Islamic Patronate* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 90. NB: Crone asserts this but offers no evidence to support such a claim.

1411 See Tritton, 'Foreign Influences,' p. 838.

1412 See I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, vol. 1, trans. C.R. Barber and S.M. Stern (New Brunswick/London, 2006), p. 109.

1413 See Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī, *al-Baṣā'ir wa-'l-dhakhā'ir*, vol. 2 (Damascus, n.d. [1964?]), pp. 414-417. For this anecdote, see R. Hoyland, 'Arabic, Syriac, and Greek Historiography in the First ʿAbbasid Century: An Inquiry into Inter-Cultural Traffic,' *Aram* 3.1-2 (1991), p. 231.

1414 On the *mawālī*, their importance in Islamic society and for the development of Islam, and on the institution of walā', see the excellent article 'Mawlā' by A.J. Wensinck and P. Crone in *EI*^{2}. To get a sense of the profound importance of the economic and social roles played by *mawālī* in all aspects of Islamic society, see J. Judah, 'The Economic Conditions of the *Mawālī* in Early Islamic Times,' trans. M. Fishbein, in M.G. Morony, ed., *Manufacturing and Labour* (Ashgate, 2003), pp. 167-197.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have focused primarily on the relationship between the Christian communities of the Middle East and the Arab conquerors who arrived in the middle of the seventh century. What is more, in my attempts at discussing milieux of contact between Christians and Muslims, I have only been able to scratch the surface of the host of ways in which Christian and Muslim lives must have intersected on a constant basis and have only touched briefly upon contacts between Christian ascetics and Muslim ascetics.

Sherlock Holmes would no doubt note that there have been many dogs, so to speak, which have not barked here—Jews and Persians being perhaps the two most prominent. This omission is the result of my own limitations—in time, space and expertise. At the same time, however, there has been not a small amount of work on Jewish connections and 'influences' on Muḥammad and the Qur'ān, and a standard trope in Islamic history emphasizes its Persianization after the ʿAbbasid revolution. Is there room in between the life of the Prophet and the ʿAbbasid *daʿwa* for Muslims and for Islam to have undergone a Syrianization?

My efforts, such as they have been, have had a rather simple goal: to expand our understanding and conceptualization of what the Middle East looked like in the centuries after the Islamic conquest and to challenge the unspoken assumption that the history of the region is the history of the minority that ruled over it. Trying to understand that politically dominant minority apart from its existence in the context of its relationship to a non-Muslim majority, adhering to highly sophisticated and more ancient faiths is, in fact, a fundamentally misguided and misleading effort. It moreover

represents a teleological and sectarian vision of the region and an understanding of its past which is both elitist and exclusionary.[1415] Against such visions of the Middle East, I have attempted to broaden the genealogy of various aspects of the region's cultural history and then make a case, as it were, for non-Muslim paternity, thereby giving voice to at least some parts of its medieval silent majority and granting that majority a part in begetting the present. In a world where the Christian population of the Middle East is in constant and sustained decline—and unfortunately often not in the most secure of circumstances—this is no mean goal or mere antiquarian endeavor.

Much and quite diverse ground has been covered in this dissertation but, perhaps incredibly, there has been a method to my madness. In my conclusion, I will attempt to briefly draw its various threads together into a broader vision of how we should think about the Late Antique and early medieval Middle East.

[1415] I borrow the notions of such history as elitist and exclusionary from Khaled Fahmy's critique of histories of 19th and 20th century Alexandria which focus only on the cosmopolitanism of its European minority as elitist and exclusionary. See K. Fahmy, 'For Cavafy, with love and squalor: some critical notes on the history and historiography of modern Alexandria,' and 'Towards a social history of modern Alexandria,' in A. Hirst and M. Silk, eds., *Alexandria, Real and Imagined* (Ashgate, 2004), pp. 263-280 and 281-306.

Conclusion: A *Syrie Trilingue*?

'What has become an open question is: Are there experiences of the past that cannot be captured by the methods of the discipline, or which at least show the limits of the discipline?' Dipesh Chakrabarty[1416]

Many pages ago, I promised that this dissertation would focus on two large historical questions: the society that the Arabs encountered when they conquered the Middle East in the seventh century and the hybrid society that those conquests subsequently helped to create. I also declared my goal was to relativize both the importance of Greek and the significance of Islam in our understanding of the early medieval Middle East.

I could have, however, chosen to frame my aims in a slightly different fashion. What unites all the disparate threads and topics I have taken up is a rather simple objective: to write about (some important aspects of) the cultural history of Late Antique and early medieval Greater Syria and Mesopotamia from a perspective which takes very seriously the existence and experience of a large population of Aramaic-speaking[1417] Christians in those regions, a population of Christians who almost certainly formed the majority of inhabitants. At root, this dissertation represents an argument that the history of the Middle East, under Byzantine rule and under Arab Muslim rule,

[1416] D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton/Oxford, 2008), p. 107.

[1417] Throughout this dissertation, I have for the most part referred to these Christians as 'Syriac-speaking' rather than 'Aramaic speaking' in keeping with convention and standard usage and so as not to confuse readers. But here, at the end, I will use 'Aramaic-speaking' rather than 'Syriac-speaking' for the simple reason that it is technically incorrect to state that all of these Christians spoke Syriac. Syriac was a literary lingua franca and was the Aramaic dialect of Edessa, but it was not the only type of Aramaic spoken. Bar Bahlul cites at least sixteen different Aramaic dialects in his famous lexicon, ranging from Qatar to Syria. The Aramaic of Edessa is only one of these. See R. Duval, ed., *Lexicon Syriacum auctore Hassano Bar Bahlule*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1901), pp. xxiv-xxv, for a listing of the various kinds of Aramaic cited by Bar Bahlul. Bar Bahlul does not mention the only other dialect of Aramaic which was used by Christians as a literary language, the dialect which scholars refer to as Christian Palestinian Aramaic, and which was used exclusively by Chalcedonian Christians Palestine into the tenth century. CPA's literature, compared to Syriac, is very, very small and is comprised only of translations from Greek.

can be only be satisfactorily written by taking into account these Aramaic-speaking Christians: they were the Dark Matter in which the politically dominant minority groups that form the focus of our traditional narratives lived and moved and had their being. Mine is an argument that these politically-dominant minorities cannot be understood apart from the majority around them. It is also an argument that the region today cannot be understood without taking into account the reality that its current state is the result of a process of Arabization and Islamization that went on for hundreds and hundreds of years. It is a process which is in fact still on-going.

When we place these Aramaic-speakers and the texts they produced at the center of our narrative and interpret large historical questions in light of the evidence they have left behind, the answers those large questions receive take on a different hue, for although they composed a number of texts of great interest and considerable usefulness for the historical reconstruction of the early medieval period, many of those texts have languished unedited in Western and Middle Eastern libraries or have sat (relatively) unstudied and underutilized in old nineteenth and early twentieth-century tomes and periodicals in the handful of Western libraries that have strong collections in Syriac studies. The footnotes of this dissertation are littered with examples of such documents: the canons and letters of Jacob of Edessa; the letters of George of the Arabs; the *Life* of Theodota of Amid; the *Life* of Simeon of the Olives; the letters of Timothy I and Isho'yahb III; the texts of a number of different manuscript colophons.

I have tried to look at some of the major cultural developments of the Late Antique and early medieval Middle East from a vantage point firmly rooted in such Syriac texts, but from one which has also drawn upon Arabic and Greek material; I have

sought to integrate Byzantine and Islamic studies with Syriac studies. My footnotes reflect the depth of my indebtedness to the patient lucubrations and *philoponia* of scholars in all three of these fields. I have done this from the conviction that any full and satisfying cultural history of the Late Antique and early medieval Middle East will be one which attempts to make the seemingly incommensurable worlds of these different groups of sources speak to one another; they were, after all, speaking to one another and intertwined in the early Middle Ages.

The seventh century has traditionally been seen as being a time of great discontinuity and transformation, a time of beginnings and endings: the end of the ancient world, the death of the classical city, the end of Rome and the beginning of Byzantium, the beginning of Islam. And so on. But, building my house on the rock of a Syriac foundation, the story I have tried to tell has been one of a cultural continuity which lasted even as the rains descended, the floods came, the winds blew and beat down upon seventh-century Middle Eastern society. I have focused on a number of different types of cultural persistence in the preceding pages: continuities in scholarly and religious practices have perhaps stood out as the most notable. The widespread cultural continuity I have tried to suggest existed (and which still exists), however, can perhaps most clearly be illustrated by another example, pointed out by Goitein long ago in a little-cited yet fascinating article.

There exists, Goitein showed, a large number of common proverbs shared by Arabic speakers from the Gulf to Morocco; these have been sedulously recorded and documented by scholars and anthropologists. Somewhat similarly, in the medieval period, Muslim scholars collected and wrote down thousands of classical Arabic

proverbs, often pre-Islamic in origin. A comparison of these medieval collections of proverbs with their modern counterparts from all over the Arab world shows that there is almost no overlap at all between the two large bodies of material. The pre-Islamic and classical Arabic proverb has had no afterlife in modern Arabic-speaking societies.

What is striking, however, is that there is considerable overlap between the proverbs used in modern Arabic-speaking societies and pre-Islamic Near Eastern proverbs that one finds recorded in Hebrew and Aramaic in Jewish sources. These pre-Islamic proverbs, Goitein stressed, were not specifically Jewish but were rather part of a stock of proverbs common to all throughout the Middle East before the advent of Islam. What is especially fascinating is that originally-Aramaic proverbs occur in roughly the same percentages in Arabic-speaking countries with no Aramaic background (like Yemen or Egypt or in the Maghrib) as they do in countries where Arabic replaced Aramaic as the language of the common people. This points, Goitein suggested, to an early appropriation by Arabic speakers of the pre-Islamic Near Eastern heritage. The larger import of his discovery of a continuity between modern Arabic proverbs and pre-Islamic Aramaic and Hebrew proverbs and a simultaneous discontinuity between modern Arabic proverbs and classical Arabic proverbs is worth keeping in mind: 'The new society of the Middle Eastern civilization,' he wrote, 'differed widely from anything that had preceded it, but still had much more in common with the Hellenized

Aramaic speaking Ancient East than with the Bedouin civilization of pre-Islamic Arabia.'[1418]

A moment's reflection will bear out the utterly unsurprising nature of Goitein's conclusion: although the Aramaic-speaking majority population of the Middle East usually disappears in our histories of the region after the Arab conquests (and even before), it did not disappear in reality; the Middle East is still populated with their descendants, though many, if not most, of them will no longer identify with these forbears. Revolutions, Richard Nixon is reported to have once said, change the way the world looks, not the way it works.[1419]

In writing about the eastern background to Byzantine hagiography, the great Bollandist Paul Peeters wrote of a Late Antique *Syrie bilingue*, a place where stories of Aramaic-speaking saints found themselves effortlessly being hellenized and transferred into Greek. The movement of stories across linguistic frontiers was not, Peeters argued, the result of the efforts of a school or the activities of a certain library. It was the outcome of a shared life between Greek speakers and Aramaic speakers: 'Ce fut plutôt une conséquence de la symbiose qui avait réuni sur le meme territoire deux ou plusieurs races différentes,' he wrote. 'Les influences dont elles ont béneficié ou pâti l'une et l'autre se sont produites par un jeu naturel de la vie.'[1420] Byzantine and oriental hagiography, composed in separate languages, had a deceptive, *prima facie* difference: the closer one looked, the more similarities one found between them,

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[1418] All of this information can be found in Goitein's article 'The Present-Day Arabic Proverb as A Testimony to the Social History of the Middle East,' pp. 361-379 in S.D. Goitein, *Studies in Islamic History and Institutions* (Leiden, 1968). Quote taken from p. 379.

[1419] I am grateful to Peter Brown for sharing this quote with me.

[1420] See P. Peeters, *Le tréfonds oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine* (Brussels, 1950), p. 71.

> la séparation suffisamment nette si on la réduit à la question des langues, le paraît moins quand on essaie d'entrer un peu plus avant dans le fond des choses. En beaucoup d'endroits, la frontière commune se réduit à une ligne fictive, out plutôt elle s'élargit en une zone indécise, sur laquelle les deux cultures ont un droit égal ou peut s'en faut. La diplomatie appellerait cela un *condominium*.[1421]

In other words, Late Antique Syria was a place where linguistic frontiers did not translate into cultural boundaries. The Arab conquests of the seventh century did not change this; instead, the prestige their new scripture enjoyed added a third literary language, Arabic, to the mix of a region with an already rich history of intercultural exchange and cross-pollination. What in fact happened in the seventh century was that Peeter's *Syrie bilingue* became a *Syrie trilingue*. In trying to place the existence and voices of the Middle East's Aramaic-speaking Christian population at the center of our understanding of the region's cultural history in the early Middle Ages, it has been my hope to capture some of the excitement of that pivotal moment in a way which does justice to the people living there at that time. And perhaps, in some small way, affect how we understand that region today.

[1421] Peeters, *Le tréfonds oriental de l'hagiographie byzantine*, p. 137.

APPENDIX: On the History of the Text of the Qur'ān

A number of different traditions relating to the collection of the Qur'ān have been preserved offering accounts of what it was that caused the Muslim community to gather and write down the revelations Muḥammad had received—justifying undertaking something which Muḥammad himself is supposed not to have ordered.[1422] Several traditions suggest that the motivating factor was the diversity and difference which existed among different readings of the Qur'ān that prompted action. In one case, 'Uthmān acted when Ḥudhayfa told him that people were disagreeing over the Qur'ān like Jews and Christians differed among one another.[1423] According to another report, 'Uthmān is supposed to have stated that he ordered the collection of the Qur'ān when he heard Muslims speaking of 'the reading of so-and-so' and 'the reading of so-and-so,' just like the People of the Book.[1424] Both traditions suggest a fear that the Muslim community would experience the sorts of disagreements about differences in Bible translations that were happening among their Christian contemporaries and which I discussed earlier in this dissertation.[1425] Such was the anxiety that the Prophet is supposed to have weighed in on the issue. When Ibn Mas'ūd heard somebody reciting the Qur'ān in a way different from what he had heard from Muḥammad, he went to Muḥammad himself and told him about it. 'I noticed anger in his face,' Ibn

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[1422] See the traditions preserved in al-Dānī, *al-Muqni'* pp. 4 , 6, where Abū Bakr and Zayd b. Thābit express initial reticence at doing something (i.e., compiling the Quran) which Muḥammad himself had not ordered.

[1423] al-Dānī, *al-Muqni'*, p. 5.

[1424] al-Dānī, *al-Muqni'*, p. 7. In another report, it is Ḥudhayfa who warns 'Uthmān that he must act before Muslims 'disagree about the Book like the Jews and Christians have disagreed,' see Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 19.

[1425] Though Ibn Kathīr understood this to refer to disagreements between Jews, Samaritans and Christians about the Torah and to differences between the four Gospels. See *idem*., *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1416), p. 70.

Mas'ūd reported, 'then he said, "You are both right. Those before you disagreed and that destroyed them."'[1426]

But, as the existence of such a *ḥadīth* might suggest, precisely such disagreements were apparently in fact taking place among Muslims. In Kufa, people following the reading of Abū Mūsā were gathering in one place and people following the reading of 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd were gathering in another; Ibn Abī Dāwūd has left us an account of a disagreement between them on the wording of a verse in Sūrat al-Baqara (2:196) which enraged Ḥudhayfa.[1427] This was no isolated incident, either: 'It has reached me,' 'Alī is reported to have said of some Muslims, 'that a certain one of them is saying, "Indeed, my reading [of the Qur'ān] is better than yours!'[1428] In Iraq, a person asked another about a verse from the Qur'ān; when it was recited to him, he responded, 'I deny that.' This was spreading among the people.[1429] Some teachers were giving instruction in the reading of one person and others were giving instruction in the reading of another person; young people were starting to meet up and disagree over the Qur'ān, to the point that they were denying each others' readings. These reports made it to 'Uthmān, who was not happy, and who observed that the worst disagreements and the most errors in the Qur'ān were occurring in places distant from the garrison cities.[1430] Another nearly identical report has Qur'ānic experts, not young people, disagreeing with one another to the point that they were fighting. 'In my presence, you disagree,' 'Uthmān is supposed to have told them, 'and you deny parts of

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1426 Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, (Damascus, 1995), p. 351.

1427 Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 12.

1428 al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 213, cf. the longer version of this report in Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 22.

1429 Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 23.

1430 Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 21.

it [sc. the Qur'ān] and make errors in it, O companions of Muḥammad! Meet together and write out for the people a main copy (*imāman*) which will unite them.'[1431] This idea that there was some sort of connection between a common text and unity between believers is reflected in the first question a Muslim Amīr is supposed to have asked the Miaphysite Patriarch John of the Sedre (d. 648) in a Muslim-Christian dialogue which may have taken place within a decade of the Muslim conquest of Syria. The Patriarch John, we are told, was asked by him 'whether the Gospel which all those who exist and are called Christians in the entire world possess is one and the same and without change in anything?' The Gospel, the Patriarch affirmed, was in fact one all over the world. To this, however, the Amīr came back: "Why is it that though the Gospel is one, the Faith differs?"'[1432]

Muslim leaders were worried at the prospect of having both a divergent text and Muslims disagreeing with one another. In another report, 'Uthmān is said to have

[1431] al-Dānī, *al-Muqni'*, p. 8. For a similar report, see also See Jalāl al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1999), p. 12. Here, 'Uthmān notes that the further away one was from him, the more errors there were in the different versions of the Quran and the more errors there were.

[1432] F. Nau, 'Un colloque du patriarche Jean avec l'émir des Agaréens et faits divers des années 712 à 716,' *Journal asiatique* 5 (1915), p. 248. ܘܐܫܬܐܠ ܡܢܗ ܗܘ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܘܐܒܐ ܕܓܘܢܐ܂ ܕܐܢ ܚܕ ܗܘ ܒܗ ܗܘ ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܘܠܐ ܡܫܚܠܦ ܒܡܕܡ ܐܝܢܐ ܕܐܚܝܕܝܢ ܟܠܗܘܢ ܐܝܠܝܢ ܕܐܝܬܝܗܘܢ ܘܡܫܬܡܗܝܢ ܟܪܣܛܝܢܐ ܕܒܟܠܗ ܥܠܡܐ܂ ܘܦܢܝ ܠܗ ܛܘܒܢܐ ܕܚܕ ܗܘ ܘܒܗ ܗܘ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܠܘܬ ܝܘܢܝܐ ܘܪܗܘܡܝܐ܂ ܘܣܘܪܝܝܐ ܘܐܓܘܦܛܝܐ܂ ܘܟܘܫܝܐ ܘܗܢܕܘܝܐ܂ ܘܐܪܡܢܝܐ ܘܦܪܣܝܐ ܘܫܪܟܐ ܕܟܠ ܥܡܡܝܢ ܘܠܫܢܝܢ܂ ܘܬܘܒ ܫܐܠ ܗܘܐ ܕܠܡܢܐ ܟܕ ܚܕ ܐܝܬܘܗܝ، ܐܘܢܓܠܝܘܢ܂ ܡܫܚܠܦܐ ܗܝܡܢܘܬܐ܂ 'And the Blessed One and Universal Father was asked by him whether the Gospel is one and the same and without change in anything, which all those who are and who are called 'Christians' in the entire world possess. And the Blessed One responded to him that it was one and the same among the Greeks and Romans and Syrians and Egyptians and Ethiopians and Indians and Armenians and Persians and the rest of all countries and languages. And again, he was asking of him, why is it that though the Gospel is one, the faith is different?' Different dates have been given for this dispute. See, e.g., Nau, 'Un Colloque,' p. 227; H. Lammens, 'A propos d'un colloque entre le patriarche Jacobite Jean 1er et 'Amr ibn al-'Aṣi,' *Journal Asiatique* 11 (1919), p. 98; G.J. Reinink, 'The Beginnings of Syriac Apologetic Literature in Response to Islam,' *Oriens Christianus* 77 (1993), pp. 171-187. Against Reinink, see more recently, H. Suermann, 'The Old Testament and the Jews in the dialogue between the Jacobite Patriarch John I and 'Umayr ibn Sa'd al-Anṣārī,' pp. 131-141, in *Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy*, ed. Juan Pedro Monferrer-Sala, (Piscataway, NJ, 2007). Also see R. Hoyland's short discussion and summary, pp. 464-465, in *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It* (Princeton, 1997).

heard the readings of Ubayy, ʻAbd Allāh b. Masʻūd and Muʻādh b. Jabal, and told the people, ʻYour prophet was taken from you only fifteen years ago and you have already disagreed about the Qur'ān?'[1433] Various *ḥadīth* credit the Prophet with having weighed in on this issue: ʻDo not dispute over the Qur'ān,' Muḥammad is supposed to have said, ʻarguing over it is unbelief.'[1434] Disagreements about the Qur'ān were causing such problems that something needed to be done. When ʻUthmān had variant codices burned, ʻAlī is reported to have said, ʻIf ʻUthmān himself had not done it, I would have!' and ʻUthmān's action is said to have pleased the people.[1435] Indeed, it was said that if ʻUthmān had not written down the Qur'ān, they would have started reciting poetry.[1436]

Traditional sources report that ʻUthmān's collection of the Qur'ān represented perhaps the third time the text was assembled—there had supposedly been earlier efforts at collection by Muḥammad himself and then by Abū Bakr.[1437] Once a consensus version of the Qur'ān had been produced at ʻUthmān's orders, he had copies of it sent out to various regions and, as I have just mentioned, ordered that all versions of Qur'ānic readings other than what was in his new version be burnt.[1438] There seems to have been a palpable anxiety that the sorts of disagreements which Muslims associated with Christians and Jews would seep into the new community and the destruction of texts was a means to stop this. ʻHadiths proliferated in the time of ʻUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,' al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad is reported to have said, ʻso he asked the people to bring them to him and when they brought them to him he ordered their burning. Then he said, "It

[1433] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 24.

[1434] See the various versions of this report cited in Abū ʻUbayd, *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, pp. 353-355.

[1435] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 12. cf. *ibid.* p. 23.

[1436] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 12, gives two different reports to this effect.

[1437] See Jalāl al-Dīn ʻAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʻulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1 (Beirut, 1999), pp. 207-208. Cf. the short summary of the traditional Muslim position by A. Jeffrey, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, (Leiden, 1937), pp. 4-5.

[1438] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 212. Cf. also, al-Dānī, *al-Muqni*ʻ, p. 7.

is another scripture like the other text of the People of the Book" (*mathnāt ka-mathnāt ahl al-kitāb*).'[1439]

'Uthmān's text of the Qur'ān was meant to record all of the revelations that Muḥammad had received, but various reports suggest that members of the Muslim community were not sure that everything had in fact been written down.[1440] 'Umar, for example, is supposed to have asked about a particular verse of the Qur'ān, but was told that it had been in the possession of a certain person who had been killed at the Battle of al-Yamāma.[1441] Another report shows the potential precariousness of the process of collecting and writing down: Zayd b. Thābit spoke of a verse from Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33:23) being lost when the 'Uthmānic codex was being copied out, so he did something about it. 'I used to hear the Apostle of God recite it,' Zayd noted. 'So we sought it out and found it with Khuzayma b. Thābit al-Anṣārī...and added it to its sūra in the codex.'[1442] And though Zayd himself had been put in charge of collecting the Qur'ān, his own knowledge of the contents of the Qur'ān might not always be the best: 'When 'Uthmān was killed,' 'Ubayd b. Ḥunayn reported, 'I said to Zayd b. Thābit, "Recite al-A'rāf [Sūra 7] for me. So he said, "I do not have it memorized. You yourself recite it for

[1439] See Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 5, (Leiden, 1322), p. 140. With reference to ET in Muhammad Ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000), p. 123. Yossi Witztum has suggested to me that *mathna* here does not refer generically to a scripture, but rather to the Mishna, and that a comparison is being made here between the *ḥadīth* as competitors with the Qur'ān and the Mishna as a competitor to the Torah. My purpose in citing the anecdote is only to show that destroying texts was a way that at least some early Muslim leaders sought to deal with potential disagreements in the community. This was a method, of course, which Christians had long been employing.

[1440] T. Nöldeke, F. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 1, *Über den Ursprung des Qorāns* (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 234-256, discusses a number of different traditions about verses which were not included in the 'Uthmānic recension. See also the discussion of H. Modarressi, 'Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur'ān: A Brief Survey,' *Studia Islamica* 77 (1993), pp. 10-13, and E. Kohlberg and M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification: The* Kitāb al-qirā'āt *of Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Sayyārī* (Leiden/Boston, 2009), pp. 12-23.

[1441] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 209. See also, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 10.

[1442] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 212. Other versions of the same tradition can be found in Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, pp. 8-9. For a discussion of the various versions of this tradition, see T. Nöldeke and F. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 2, *Die Sammlung des Qorāns* (Leipzig, 1919), p. 14, nn. 2 and 3.

me." So I recited it for him and he did not find fault with me, either for an *alif* or for a *wāw*.'[1443]

Discussions of *nāsikh wa-mansūkh*—abrogating and abrogated verses in the Qur'ān—preserve accounts which suggest that not insignificant portions of the original Qur'ān were actually not recorded.[1444] 'By no means should any one of you say,' Ibn 'Umar is reported to have stated, '"I have learned (*qad akhadhtu*) all of the Qur'ān"—and he does not know what "all of it" is! Much of the Qur'ān has gone away. Instead, let him say: "I have learned what has appeared [in the text]."'[1445] According to a report from 'Ā'isha, in the time of Muḥammad, Sūrat al-Aḥzāb (33) was recited with 200 verses, but when 'Uthmān wrote out the codices, he was only able to make of them what one now finds in this *sūra*—some 73 verses.[1446] Similarly, Ubayy b. Ka'b is reported to have said that Sūrat al-Aḥzāb was equal in length to Sūrat al-Baqara (2), the longest *sūra* in the Qur'ān, and that it contained the famous 'Stoning Verse,' (*āyat al-rajm*) which I will mention again shortly.[1447] This is not the only *sūra* which was apparently much shorter than it had originally been. Ḥudhayfa is reported to have stated that only one-fourth of Sūrat al-Barā'a (9) was now being recited.[1448] Ubayy is also reported to have had a longer version of Sūrat al-Bayyina (98) which he claimed had been recited to him

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[1443] Ibn Sa'd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, vol. 5 (Leiden, 1322), p. 211. With reference to ET in Muhammd ibn Sa'd, *The Men of Madina*, vol. 2, trans. A. Bewley (London, 2000) p. 177.

[1444] I rely here mostly on the verses listed by al-Suyūṭī in his discussion of *nāsikh wa-mansūkh* in the *Itqān*, but see also Abū 'Ubayd's chapter on 'What was lifted up (*rufi'a*) from the Qur'ān after its being sent down and which has not been established in the codices (*maṣāḥif*),' in *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Damascus, 1995), pp. 320-327, which contains much of the same material. An ET of Abū 'Ubayd's chapter is available in: A. Jeffery, 'Abū 'Ubaid on the verses Missing from the Qur'ān,' *The Moslem World* 28 (1938), pp. 61-65.

[1445] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 662.

[1446] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 662.

[1447] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 662.

[1448] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 665. See also the reports from Ibn 'Abbās and 'Umar about the long length of al-Barā'a's revelation, *ibid*., pp. 197-198.

by Muḥammad on God's orders.[1449] Another verse not found in the 'Uthmānic recension is mentioned in a report attributed to Ḥumayda bint Abī Yūnis in which she recalled a passage her father recited to her from the codex of 'Ā'isha, 'before 'Uthmān changed the codices.'[1450] Maslama b. Mukhallad al-Anṣārī was able to recite two *āya*s from the Qur'ān which were not written down in the codex of 'Uthmān.[1451] Anas spoke of a verse which they recited until it was withdrawn (*rufi'a*).[1452] Some claimed that the Qur'ān had once contained a verse about stoning: 'If a grown man and a woman commit adultery, stone them without hesitation, as a warning from God, for God is mighty, wise,'[1453] though such a verse is no longer in the text. 'Umar famously is reported to have argued strongly that it was once part of the revelation: 'I indeed wanted to write on the margin of the Codex,' he is reported to have said, "Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf bear witness that the Apostle of God stoned and we also stoned.'[1454] 'By God,' 'Umar is also supposed to have said about this missing verse, 'were it not that people might say "'Umar had added something to God's book," I would have written in it just as it was revealed.'[1455]

But more than verses, or even extended sections of *sūra*s were said to have not been recorded—entire *sūra*s were now gone. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī spoke of a *sūra* having

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[1449] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p.663. For discussion of the three verses of Ubayy which are not present in the 'Uthmānic recension, see Nöldeke-Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 2, pp. 44-45. See also the report of two additional verses of Sūrat al-Barā'a (9) which were added after the entirety of the *sūra* had been thought to have been collected, on the basis of Ubayy's recollection: Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 9.

[1450] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, pp. 662-663.

[1451] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 664.

[1452] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 665.

[1453] Translation Jeffery, slightly altered, taken from 'Verses Missing from the Qur'an,' p. 62. For the Arabic text, see Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 321.

[1454] Translation Jeffery, with slight alterations, 'Verses Missing from the Quran,' p. 63. Arabic text in Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 322.

[1455] Translation Jeffery, with slight alterations, 'Verses Missing from the Quran,' p. 63. Arabic text in Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 321.

been sent down which was like Sūrat al-Barā'a (9), but which was then retracted (*rufi'at*); a verse from this *sūra*, however, had been memorized, though it is not in the 'Uthmānic text.[1456] And this was not the only lost *sūra* Abū Mūsā knew of. 'We used to recite a *sūra* which we likened to one of the *musabbiḥāt*,' he is reported to have stated, 'but we were caused to forget it.' Abū Mūsā did, however, manage to memorize one verse from it.[1457] Another report speaks of two men who would recite a *sūra* which the Prophet had recited to them. One night, while praying, they found that they could not even recite a letter from the *sūra*. The next morning, they spoke to Muḥammad about it. 'It is something which has been abrogated,' he said to them, 'turn away from it.'[1458] In this case, the *sūra*s disappeared with no remnants left behind, but we know of at least two other texts circulating in the early Islamic period—referred to, among other things, as Sūrat al-Khal' and Sūrat al-Ḥafd—which were regarded as Qur'ānic *sūra*s but which were not in 'Uthmān's recension. What's more, the Islamic tradition has not only preserved reports about these two *sūra*s but has also retained their actual texts. Modern scholarship has associated them most closely with Ubayy b. Ka'b,[1459] and they are reported to have been written down in his codex,[1460] but Ubayy was not the only figure connected to them in the tradition. 'Abd Allāh b. Zurayr al-Ghāfiqī claimed to have learned them from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.[1461] 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was said to have used them while praying.[1462] Ibn 'Abbās was said to have these two *sūra*s in his codex as

[1456] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, pp. 663-664.
[1457] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 664. , The *musabbiḥāt* are *sūra*s 57, 59, 61, 62, 64.
[1458] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 664.
[1459] See e.g., W.M. Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān*, (Edinburgh, 1970), p. 46, and the discussion of the *sūras* in T. Nöldeke and F. Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 2, (Leipzig, 1919), pp. 33-38.
[1460] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 229. For their place in Ubayy's ordering of the *sūra*s, see *ibid*., p. 226.
[1461] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 229.
[1462] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 229.

readings of both Ubayy b. Ka‘b and Abū Mūsā.[1463] Umayya b. ‘Abd Allāh b. Khālid is said to have recited these two *sūra*s in Khurasan.[1464]

I have spoken only of verses and passages regarded as revelation by some early Muslims but which did not make it into ‘Uthmān’s codex, but it was the case that for at least some Muslims, parts of the ‘Uthmānic recension did not belong in the actual Qur’ān. So, whereas Ubayy’s copy of the Qur’ān seems to have included material in it that ‘Uthmān’s recension would not, ‘Uthmān’s version would have texts not found in the famous codex of Ibn Mas‘ūd. The latter was notable for the fact that it excluded three *sūra*s found in the ‘Uthmānic text: the Fātiḥa (*sūra* 1) and *sūra*s 113 (al-Falaq) and 114 (al-Nās), known as al-Mu‘awwidhatān.[1465] In fact, it is reported that Ibn Mas‘ūd used to scrape the text of these latter two out of the ‘Uthmānic codex: ‘Do not mix the Qur’ān with what is not from it,’ he said, ‘these two are not from the Book of God.’[1466]

‘Uthmān’s attempt at eliminating disagreement and creating unity through a common text of the Qur’ān was not completely successful. I have only focused here on traditions recorded in Sunnī sources about missing verses and *sūra*s in the Qur’ān, but in this early period groups other than the proto-Sunnīs had views about the completeness of the ‘Uthmānic recension. A group of the Khawārij claimed that Sūrat Yūsuf (12) was not part of the Qur’ānic revelation.[1467] Some partisans of ‘Alī would argue that ‘Uthmān’s text had omitted parts of Muḥammad’s revelation or had added to

[1463] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 230.
[1464] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, p. 230.
[1465] See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, pp. 227, 229.
[1466] The text continues, however, ‘The Prophet...was only ordered to seek refuge in God by means of them.’ See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī tafsīr bi-’l-ma’thūr*, vol. 15, (Cairo, 2003), p. 784.
[1467] See Abū ’l-Ḥasan Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, *Kitāb maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn* (Weisbaden, 1980), p. 96 and Modarressi, ‘Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur’ān,’ p. 23, esp. n. 106.

it;[1468] and indeed, a number of passages in the 'Uthmānic version of the Qur'ān have variants in other codices which mention either 'Alī or the family of Muḥammad in a manner which would seem to lend support to the proto-Shi'ī cause. Supporters of 'Alī and his family pointed to such passages as evidence that 'Uthmān had repressed anything that might aid their case. [1469]

Even 'Uthmān's attempt at having older codices destroyed was not entirely successful. A number of traditions have been preserved in which 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd voiced his strong opposition to the destruction of codices which did not agree with the text produced by Zayd b. Thābit.[1470] In fact, Ibn Mas'ūd refused to give his codex of the Qur'ān over to be burned and it became very popular in Kufa.[1471] But Ibn Mas'ūd was not the only Companion who had had his own reading of the Qur'ān. 'People who were Companions of the Prophet...,' Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh is reported to have said, 'recited the Qur'ān, and then they passed away and I have not heard their readings.'[1472] Ḥafṣa, one of the wives of Muḥammad, is supposed to have come into possession of the text of the Qur'ān which had been produced Zayd b. Thābit for Abū Bakr after her father 'Umar b.

[1468] See al-Ash'arī, *Kitāb maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn*, p. 47. See also 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. Ḥazm, *al-Faṣl fī 'l-milal wa-'l-ahwā' al-niḥal*, vol. 2, (Beirut, 1975), p. 76.

[1469] See Modarressi, 'Early Debates on the Integrity of the Qur'ān,' pp. 25-26, and citations therein from the codices of Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy and others. On Shi'ī attitudes towards Uthmān's text, in addition to Modarressi's article, also see E. Kohlberg, 'Some notes on the Imāmite Attitude to the Qur'ān,' in S.M. Stern, A. Hourani and V. Brown, eds., *Islamic Philosophy and the Classical Tradition: Essays Presented by his friends and pupils to Richard Walzer on his seventieth birthday* (Columbia, South Carolina, 1972), pp. 209-224, and see I. *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, trans. W. H. Behn, (Wiesbaden, 2006), pp. 171-183. For a translation of Shi'ī verses and (apparently forged) *sūras*, see also W. St. Clair Tisdall, 'Shi'ah Additions to the Koran,' *The Moslem World* 3 (1913), pp. 227-241.

[1470] See, e.g., Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, pp. 13-18, but NB, the tradition preserved in *ibid*., p. 18, where Ibn Mas'ūd comforts people frightened at the news of 'Uthmān's promulgation of new Quranic codices.

[1471] On Ibn Mas'ūd's codex, see Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, pp. 20-24.

[1472] Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 83. Cf. Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, p. 8.

al-Khaṭṭāb's death.[1473] It is reported that Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, the governor of Medina, used to ask Ḥafṣa for this text, but she refused to give it to him. Once Ḥafsa died, Marwān ordered that Ḥafṣa's Qur'ān be sent to him and had it torn up. 'I only did this,' he is supposed to have said, 'because what is in it has been written and preserved in the Codex and I feared that if a long time passed among the people, someone might have doubts concerning these pages or say that there was something in them which was not written down [in 'Uthmān's codex].'[1474]

In fact, Arthur Jeffery identified some 13 non-Uthmānic codices held by Companions of Muḥammad and another 13 secondary codices held by other early Muslims.[1475] And we have some indirect knowledge of their contents, too: medieval Muslim scholars composed works on the alternate readings available in these other *maṣāḥif* and their variants would also be cited in commentary literature, though it seems to be the case that the variants which were preserved were ones which helped shed light on the 'Uthmānic text; those which differed most radically from what became the received text did not get cited and are therefore now lost.[1476] Though none of these codices are known to survive, study of the ancient Qur'ānic fragments found in the Great Mosque of Ṣan'ā' in Yemen has shown that some of the manuscripts there do not follow the *sūra* organization adopted in 'Uthmān's reception: some seem to follow the *sūra* arrangement of Ibn Mas'ūd, while others seem to agree with the arrangement medieval sources credit to Ubayy b. Ka'b, while still others follow an arrangement of

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1473 See Ibn Kathīr, *Kitāb faḍā'il al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1416), pp. 56, 64-65.
1474 See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, pp. 24-25.
1475 see Jeffery, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, p. 14.
1476 See Jeffrey, *Materials for the History of the Text of the Qur'ān*, p. 10.

*sūra*s not mentioned in medieval sources.[1477] Of these various Companion Codices, that of Ibn Mas'ūd was perhaps the most famous and best known and its divergences from the 'Uthmānic recension would be used polemically. In his day, Ibn Qutayba (d. 276 AH/AD 889) would report that 'slanderers' (*al-ṭāʿinīn*) who were critical of the Qur'ān were pointing out the many differences between the Qur'ānic codex of Ibn Mas'ūd and both 'ancient and modern codices.'[1478] The 'slanderers' Ibn Qutayba referred to may have perhaps been Muslim freethinkers and apostates,[1479] but Christians would also cite Ibn Mas'ūd against Muslims in a polemical context: Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456 AH/AD 1064) mentioned that Christians were pointing out the differences between Ibn Mas'ūd's codex and the standard codices of the Qur'ān,[1480] and in his famous and withering *Apology*, written perhaps between AD 819 and 825,[1481] the Christian writer known by the pseudonym 'al-Kindī' would speak about the codices of 'Alī, Ubayy b. Ka'b, Ibn Mas'ūd, referring specifically to Ibn Mas'ūd's not including *Sūra*s 113 and 114 in his codex.[1482] For his part, in the ninth century al-Jāḥiẓ would similarly complain that Christians were seeking out contradictions in *ḥadīth*, weak *isnād*s in Muslim reports and confusing verses in the Qur'ān and sowing confusion among weak and ordinary Muslims.[1483]

[1477] See G.R. Puin, 'Observations on early Qur'ān Manuscripts in Ṣan'ā',' in S. Wild, ed., *The Qur'an as Text* (Leiden, 1996), pp. 110-111. For this point, cf. M. Cook, *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000), p. 122.

[1478] See 'Abd Allāh b. Muslim b. Qutayba, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān* (Cairo, 1954), p. 19.

[1479] See, e.g., Ibn Qutayba's use of 'slanderers' (*ṭāʿinīn*) in a class with freethinkers (*mulḥidīn*), apostates (*murtāddīn*) and doubters (*murtābīn*) in his *Ta'wīl mukhtalif al-ḥadīth* (Cairo, 2006), p. 59. He could also be referring polemically to Mu'tazilī opponents.

[1480] Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Faṣl fī 'l-milal wa-'l-ahwā' al-niḥal*, vol. 2, p. 76. I was pointed to this passage by a footnote in a work of I. Goldziher, but can no longer recall where exactly I found the reference.

[1481] See G. Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien sous le calife Al-Ma'mûn (813-834). Les épitres d' Al-Hashimî et d' Al-Kindî* (Paris, 1985), p. 63.

[1482] See *Risālat 'Abd Allāh b. Ismā'īl al-Hāshimī ilā 'Abd al-Masīḥ b. Isḥāq al-Kindī yad'ūhu bi-hā ilā al-Islām wa-risālat 'Abd al-Masīḥ ilā al-Hāshimī yaruddu bi-hā 'alayhi wa-yad'ūhu ilā al-Naṣrāniyya* (n.p. 1880), pp. 80-82; the reference to the '*al-mu'awwidhatayn*' and Ibn Mas'ūd is on p. 81.

[1483] Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Mukhtār fī 'l-radd alā al-Naṣārā* (Beirut, 1991), p. 66; cf. *idem*., *Thalāth rasā'il li-Abī 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ* (Cairo, 1344), pp. 19-20.

The collection of the text spearheaded by Zayd b. Thābit resulted in a personal copy of the Qur'ān for the Caliph 'Uthmān which was known as the *imām*; 'Uthmān had four copies of the *imām* made and then sent one to Basra, one to Kufa, one to Damascus and kept one in Medina.[1484] But these copies were not uniform, nor did they represent the final official version of the text of the Qur'ān. Lists have been preserved which record the differences in lettering between the *imām* and the Medinan codex as well as the differences between the Kufan, Basran, Medinan, and Damascene codices.[1485]

What's more, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād (d. 67 AH/AD 686), an Umayyad governor in Iraq, is said to have added two-thousand letters to the Qur'ān.[1486] In a report whose reference to codices (*maṣāḥif*) is anachronistic and which was perhaps written in response to such textual interventions, Abū Rajā' is supposed to have asked Muḥammad about the diacritical points (*nuqat*) of the codices. 'I fear,' Muḥammad responded, 'that you will add to the letters or take away from them.'[1487] In addition to 'Ubayd Allāh's additions to the text, there is some evidence that al-Ḥajjāj b. Yusuf (d. 95 AH/AD 714), another Umayyad governor in Iraq, altered the text of the Qur'ān.[1488] Indeed, al-Ḥajjāj may have even acted as a second 'Uthmān and promulgated a new official version of the Qur'ān, based on the 'Uthmānic recension. Al-Kindī made reference to an attempt

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[1484] See al-Dānī, *al-Muqni'*, p. 10; Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, p. 333; and Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 37. There are also reports of seven rather than four copies being made. See, e.g., Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 34. The copy sent by 'Uthmān to each of these four places seems also to have been referred to as an *imām*—see *ibid*., pp. 44-47. Also see Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān*, vol. 1, (Cairo, 1957), p. 240.

[1485] See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, pp. 37-49. Note the reference to the *maṣāḥif* of the people of Mecca on pp. 40, 47, and 49. See also Abū 'Ubayd, *Faḍā'il al-Qur'ān*, pp. 328-333 and Nöldeke-Schwally, *Geschichte des Qorāns*, vol. 2, pp. 6-19.

[1486] See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 117. Cf. also Kohlberg and Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification*, p. 18.

[1487] See Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf*, vol. 10, p. 23.

[1488] On this alleged collection by al-Ḥajjāj and for the following, cf. Kohlberg and Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification*, pp. 18-20.

by ʿAlī to collect the Qur'ān—an effort reported in Islamic sources[1489]—and then made reference to an attempt by al-Ḥajjāj to collect the Qur'ān. 'You know,' al-Kindī wrote, 'that al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf also collected the codices and omitted many things from them.'[1490] We find out what these many things are supposed to have been a bit later when al-Kindī makes more detailed reference to the collection of the Qur'ān. It seems that al-Kindī was quite familiar with Islamic sources—he speaks, for instance, about the disagreements among Muslims which led to ʿUthmān's decision to issue a standard text, the versions of ʿAlī and Ubayy b. Kaʿb, Ibn Masʿūd's refusal to give his codex over, Zayd b. Thābit's manner of collecting the Qur'ān,[1491] even about the text and controversy surrounding the 'Stoning Verse' and the partial text of one of the two 'lost *sūra*s' I made reference to above.[1492] When he came to al-Ḥajjāj, al-Kindī alleged that

> he did not leave any codex, save that he gathered it and omitted from it many things—they mentioned that [the things omitted] were revealed concerning the descendants of Umayya, with the names of people, and concerning the descendants of ʿAbbās, with the names of people. Copies were written out, with the composition al-Ḥajjāj wanted, in six codices. One was sent to Egypt and another to Syria, and another to Medina, and another to Mecca, and another to Kufa and another to Basra. He sought out the earlier codices and boiled oil for them and dumped them in it and so they were cut off; he imitated in that what ʿUthmān had done.[1493]

It is important to stress al-Kindī's apparent familiarity with Islamic sources, for it gives us reason to think that there may be some basis beyond polemical fancy in his accusation that al-Ḥajjāj played some sort of role in shaping the text of the Qur'ān. al-

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1489 See, e.g., Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, p. 10, and Modarressi, 'Early Debates,' pp. 14, 17-22.

1490 See *Risālat ʿAbd Allāh b. Ismāʿīl al-Hāshimī ilā ʿAbd al-Masīḥ b. Isḥāq al-Kindī yadʿūhu bi-hā ilā al-Islām wa-risālat ʿAbd al-Masīḥ ilā al-Hāshimī yaruddu bi-hā ʿalayhi wa-yadʿūhu ilā al-Naṣrāniyya* (n.p. 1880), p. 78. FT in Tartar, *Dialogue islamo-chrétien*, p. 183.

1491 Compare, for instance, al-Kindī's story of Zayd's decision to write down *al-tābūt* rather than *al-tābūh* (*Risāla*, p. 80) with the same story in al-Dānī, *al-Muqniʿ*, p. 5.

1492 See *Risāla*, pp. 80-82.

1493 *Risāla*, p. 82. My translation, but see the ET of A. Mingana in *idem*., 'The Transmission of the Koran,' *The Moslem World* 7 (1917), p. 409 and the FT of Tartar in *Dialogue islamo-chrétien*, p. 190.

Hajjāj was also accused of having promulgated an official version of the Qur'ān in a letter from Leo III to 'Umar II preserved in the Armenian history of Ghevond.[1494] Muslim authors, too, recorded recollections of al-Ḥajjāj having altered the text of the Qur'ān. According to Ibn Abī Dāwūd, al-Ḥajjāj changed eleven different readings in 'Uthmān's recension and these changes which have been preserved in lists,[1495] and Arthur Jeffery collected other evidence from other Muslim sources which indicate that al-Ḥajjāj played some sort of role in altering the standard text of the Qur'ān.[1496]

Whatever the reality behind these claims, it is clear that decades after the publication of 'Uthmān's edition, the text of the Qur'ān was still not fully stabilized: Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, writing perhaps in the year 700, seems to quote the Qur'ān in a version which does not correspond to the 'Uthmānic recension,[1497] and the deviation of inscriptions on early Islamic coins and monuments from the standard 'Uthmānic text has also been taken as an indicator that the Qur'ānic text was not completely fixed post-'Uthmān, or that there was a flexible attitude towards its citation.[1498] Most famously, perhaps, it has been pointed out that the Qur'ānic text in inscriptions on the

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[1494] See A. Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text of the Correspondence between 'Umar II and Leo III,' *The Harvard Theological Review* 37 (1944), p. 298.

[1495] See Ibn Abī Dāwūd, *Kitāb al-Maṣāḥif*, pp. 49-50, 117-118.

[1496] See Jeffery, 'Ghevond's Text,' p. 298, n. 48.

[1497] See M. Cook, *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 120-121. On Ḥasan's readings of the Quran, see, G. Bergsträsser, 'Die Koranlesung des Hasan von Basra,' *Islamica* 2 (1926) pp. 11-57 and more recently, O. Hamdan, *Studien zur Kanonisierung des Korantexts* (Wiesbaden, 2006). The text was first published in H. Ritter, 'Studien zur Geschichte der islamischen Frömmigkeit,' *Islam* 21 (1933), pp. 1-83 (Arabic text on pp. 67-82) and has most recently been published in its two major recensions in S. A. Mourad, *Early Islam between Myth and History: al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (D. 110 H/728 CE) and the Formation of his Legacy in Classical Islamic Scholarship* (Leiden/Boston, 2006), p. 284-302. On this epistle and its date, see Mourad, *ibid*, pp. 176-239. Mourad suggests that it is in fact a tenth-century forgery not actually written by Ḥasan. On this epistle, also see M. Cook, *Early Muslim Dogma: A Source-Critical Study* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 117-123.

[1498] Cook, *The Koran*, p. 121-122. For examples of slight changes in coins and inscriptions, see the article by R. Hoyland and V. Porter, 'Epigraphy,' in *The Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān*, vol. 2, (Leiden, 2002), pp. 25-43, esp. 'The Manipulation of the Qur'ān in Inscriptions,' pp. 30-31. See also, F. Imbert, 'Le Coran dans les graffiti des deux premiers siècles de l'hégire,' *Arabica* 47 (2000), pp. 381-390, esp. p. 389. Also, cf. ST 640(34) lns. 9-10 in Y.D. Nevo, Z. Cohen, and D. Heftman, *Ancient Arabic Inscriptions from the Negev*, vol. 1, (Jerusalem, 1993), p. 54.

Dome of the Rock, dated to 72 AH/AD 691-692, differs slightly from our current ʻUthmānic text.[1499] Study of early Qur'ānic commentators from the second and third Islamic centuries, such as Mujāhid (d. 104/722), Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 162/778), ʻAbd Allāh b. Wahb (d. 197/812), ʻAbd al-Razzāq (d. 211/827), al-Farrā' (d. 207/822) and others shows that into the time of al-Farrā', the codex and readings of at least Ibn Masʻūd were treated as equals to those of ʻUthmān, though the latter's text had begun to be accepted as the norm.[1500]

It should also be pointed out that the ʻUthmānic recension did not itself eliminate diversity with respect to the Qur'ānic text: it only provided a boundary which might limit the possible number of variations in the text—this was because it was written in a script which contained no vowel markings or diacritical points. The ambiguity in the Arabic script was well-known—indeed, in his discussions with the Muslim wazir Abū al-Qasim al-Ḥusayn b. ʻAlī al-Maghribī in 417 AH/1026 AD, the East Syrian Elia bar Shinaya, Metropolitan of Nisibis (d. after AD 1049), would cite Qur'ānic textual variants as evidence that the Arabic alphabet was more ambiguous and therefore inferior to the Syriac alphabet.[1501] The consonantal skeleton of ʻUthmān's text of the Qur'ān was able to support a certain amount of textual indeterminacy and Muslim exegetical literature has preserved evidence of thousands of textual variants of different types.[1502] Thus, for instance, the consonantal skeleton of the same word in Q 4:94 was read by some as *fa-tabayyanū* ('ponder') and by others as *fa-tathabbatū*

[1499] See Kohlberg and Moezzi, *Revelation and Falsification*, pp. 20-21.

[1500] For this point, see pp. 354-355 of F. Leemhuis' article 'Readings of the Qur'ān,' in *The Encyclopedia of the Qur'ān,* vol. 4 (Leiden/Boston, 2004).

[1501] See L. Cheikho, 'Majālis Īliyyā Maṭrān Naṣībīn,' *al-Machriq* 5 (1922), p. 374. On Elia and the theological aspects of these discussions, see E.-K. Delly, *La théologie d'Elie bar-Šénaya. Etude et traduction de ses Entretiens* (Rome, 1957).

[1502] See, for example, enormous number of readings from a wide variety of Islamic sources collected in ʻAbd al-Laṭīf al-Khaṭīb, *Muʻjam al-qirā'āt*, vols. 1-11, (Damascus, 2002).

(‘ascertain’) depending on where diacritics were placed.[1503] Despite the fact that the two readings read every single letter in the verbal root in distinct ways in this instance, the consequent difference in meaning between the two words was not very significant. But in other cases, however, different accepted vocalizations of the same ‘Uthmānic consonantal skeleton might lead to contradictory legal rulings.[1504] And Goldziher documented a number of other instances where the ambiguity in the consonantal text allowed the introduction of readings clearly motivated by theological considerations: ‘Several attempts,’ he wrote, ‘at deviation from the Koranic *textus receptus* have as their base the scruple to attribute expressions to God and the Prophet which are considered improper and embarrassing for the Supreme Being and His Messenger.’[1505] Just as was the case with the story of the ‘Satanic Verses,’ and the story of Muḥammad’s plan to kill himself, theological qualms influenced the later Islamic tradition’s understanding texts which had been unobjectionable to early Muslims.[1506]

As a strategy for dealing with the multiplicity of textual variants to the ‘Uthmānic text, the Sunnī tradition would make a distinction between the Qur’ān—the divine communication (*al-waḥī*) sent down to Muḥammad—and the different readings (*qirā’āt*) of the Qur’ān—the difference in the writing of the words of the communication.[1507] A famous statement of Muḥammad provided another way of accounting for these variations: ‘The Qur’ān has come down in seven *aḥrūf*, all of them

[1503] See I. Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, ed. and trans. W.H. Behn, (Wiesbaden, 2006), p. 3, and cf. e.g., Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Abī Bakr al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li-aḥkām al-Qur’ān*, vol. 7 (Beirut, 2006), p. 49.

[1504] E.g., *lamastum* vs. *lāmastum* in Q 4:43 and *yaṭhurna* vs. *yaṭṭahharna* in Q 2:222. For these and more, see al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, pp. 326-327.

[1505] Goldziher, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, p. 12; see pp. 12-19 for examples of these changes in the text.

[1506] See also Goldziher’s discussion of a similar process of theologically-motivated sanitization in the *hadīth* literature, *Schools of Koranic Commentators*, pp. 19-20.

[1507] See al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, vol. 1, p. 218.

clear and sufficient,' the Prophet was reported to have said when approached with differing versions of the same Qur'ānic passage, 'So recite as you wish.'[1508] What exactly *aḥrūf* (sing. *ḥarf*) meant in this statement, however, was not exactly clear to later Muslims—al-Suyūṭī was able to list thirty-five different ways that scholars had understood the term—and whatever the text's meaning may have been, its ambiguity allowed it to be invoked almost talismanically by later Muslims who seeking to make sense of and find Prophetic legitimation for the potentially confusing and unnerving mass of information about the diversity of the Qur'ānic text.[1509]

The use of non-'Uthmānic readings of the Qur'ān would continue down until the fourth/tenth century until Ibn Mujāhid (d. 324/936) established seven canonical readings of the 'Uthmānic consonantal text.[1510] Ibn Mujāhid himself was not averse to resorting to political authorities to enforce the hegemony of the 'Uthmānic version of the Qur'ān. His contemporary, Ibn Shanabūdh (d. 328 AH/AD 939), would not only recite the Qur'ān in the versions of Ibn Mas'ūd, Ubayy b. Ka'b and others, but would also apparently debate people about his choice of Qur'ānic readings. Ibn Mujāhid brought Ibn Shanabūdh to the attention of the wazir Ibn Muqla who had him beaten and tortured until Ibn Shanabūdh withdrew from his previous position and acknowledged that the codex of 'Uthmān was the standard which one could not contradict and the only text from which one could recite the Qur'ān.[1511] At about this

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[1508] See e.g., Ibn Qutayba's invocation of this *hadīth* to answer critics of the Qur'ān in *idem*, *Ta'wīl mushkil al-Qur'ān*, pp. 26-32. For various versions of this *hadīth*, see Aḥmad al-Baylī, *al-Ikhtilāf bayna al-qirā'āt* (Beirut, 1988), pp. 39-43.

[1509] al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān*, pp. 172-183.

[1510] See Leemhuis, 'Readings of the Qur'ān,' p. 356 and cf. al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, vol. 1, p. 327-329.

[1511] See Yāqūt b. 'Abd Allāh al-Hamawī, *Kitāb irshād al-arīb ilā ma'rifat al-adīb*, vol. 6, (Cairo, 1930), pp. 300-304 and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Ta'rīkh madīnat al-salām*, vol. 2 (Beirut, 2001), pp. 103-104. See also R. Paret's article, 'Ibn Shanabūdh (Shanbūdh, Shannabūdh), Abu 'l-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ayyūb b. al-Ṣalt al-Baghdādī' in *EI*^{2}.

same time, another figure Ibn Miqsam (d. 354 AH/AD 965), also fell afoul of the authorities for reciting a version of the Qur'ān which contradicted the consensus 'Uthmānic text and was summoned to the Sultan for going rogue in his Qur'ānic recitation.[1512]

Ibn Mujāhid would represent the final culmination of 'Uthmān's work at creating a unity text of the Qur'ān four centuries earlier. Before him, a book had been written mentioning five readings of the 'Uthmānic text.[1513] After Ibn Mujāhid, the number of canonical readings would increase to ten and then to fourteen.[1514]

[1512] There are conflicting reports as to whether he repented. See Yāqūt, *Kitāb irshād al-arīb*, vol. 6, pp. 498-501. See also G.H.A. Juynboll's article, 'Ibn Miḳsam,' in *EI*[2] (Supplement).

[1513] By Ibn Jubayr, see al-Zarkashī, *al-Burhān*, vol. 1, p. 329.

[1514] For the history of the *qirā'āt* in general, see Leemhuis, 'Readings of the Qur'ān,' pp. 355-361.

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